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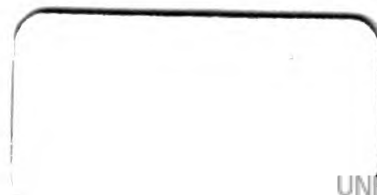


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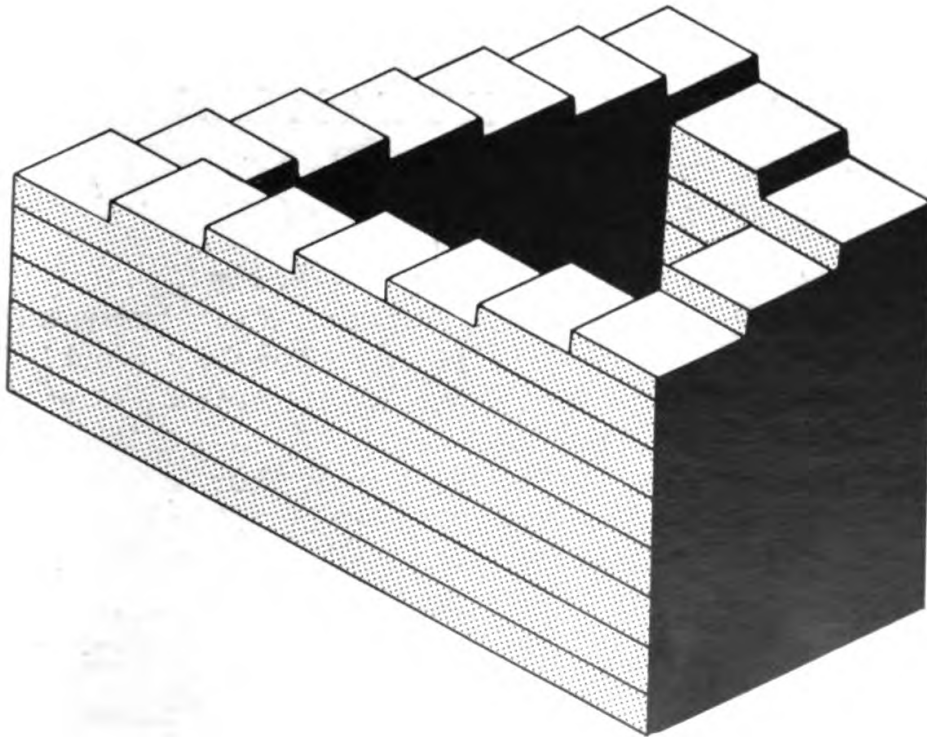
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# Editorial

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In this editorial we feel driven to ask : what is a religious body? What is a genuine religious group—in Christian terminology, what is a church?

We shall not produce an immediate answer; indeed we shall go on asking the question in the next number; we want to know both what is the true, and therefore in the deep sense scientific, answer, and also whether there is any insight individual people can gain that will help them to lessen—even redcem—the pain caused in one way or another to the whole world by the events of this summer. We have seen the cruelty of Moscow, the corruption of the Chicago Democratic Convention, the oppressiveness of Rome, the incomprehension of Protestantism, the Civil Service aloofness and inertia of the Lambeth Conference. What insight can we obtain to help ourselves and others to bear the pain of these?

The first step is to get a wide enough conception of a religious group. In this context, for instance, it is important to see that the controversy between the Czech Praesidium and the Russian Praesidium is not only a political controversy and a strategic and military operation; it is also a religious controversy between the two basic orientations of the Communist Church. It is to this fact—that the Russians as well as the Czechs owe allegiance to a common Marxist view of life and code of conduct—that the Czech negotiators in Moscow owe their lives. President Svoboda, Hero of the Soviet Union, whose very name means “Liberty”, protested in the name of world Communism to world Communism, defying death, fatigue, pain and conventionality, and—to a far greater extent than at present any liberal Catholic is currently being listened to in the Vatican—was initially shouted at, but also finally argued with and heard. Meanwhile the young Czech martyrs in defence of democratic Communism jumped unarmed on to those metal lions in the Prague arena. Their heroism, their fearlessness, exactly recall those of their early Christian counterparts, and who doubts that the blood of these martyrs will again be the seed of some new church?

By contrast to this, and with honourable exceptions, the whole Roman Catholic Church seems fear-ridden—possibly because there are no visible tanks on which to write slogans; only an invisible, all-pervasive oppression by encyclical. But the right comparison is between Moscow (once called the Third Rome with Peking now as its Byzantium) and the Vatican, i.e. between church and church:



not between Moscow and the far more primitive and barbaric happenings at the Democratic Convention in Chicago.

Chicago must come in because the demonstrators there, in a yet wider sense of "church", are also a church. They are a latter-day version of the Seventeenth Century Leveller movements—an upsurge of people who are desperate about the corrupt and degenerate state of established politics and passionately concerned over peace and human equality. Nor has Chicago failed to produce its chevalier and its martyrs. McCarthy in particular, the ex-Benedictine novice, who still (like the editorial group of this journal) goes every so often into religious retreat, has been smeared and eliminated as being impossibly aloof or psychologically unacceptable basically because he does not play the game of presidential election politics according to the unwritten rules; as these include buying delegates with promises of favours and offers of jobs and contracts, can anyone doubt that there is a religious issue at stake here? It is indeed a "Yogi and Commissar" situation. Unless a politician can play the game according to the rules of the party machine, he is unlikely to get elected and to get into a position to do anything about changing the rules; so that in the end the rules of the party machine come to have the force of dogmas, for failing to conform to which the deviant politician suffers excommunication.

It will be evident that we have been defining a church very widely indeed. This is essential if the issue "What is a church?" is to be seen in its full setting. For if we confine ourselves to the actions of bodies such as the Papal Curia and the Lambeth Conference, we could get the idea that these were mainly concerned to maintain their traditional privileges by making a dead set at the one remaining class of people they can still bully—women. The Pope denies women personal freedom of conscience; the Anglican Bishops at Lambeth denied them any effective ecclesiastical membership, by barring them from all forms of religious authority, and so of sharing in the decision-making processes of the body to which they in theory belong. (Consider the difference of status Frances Banks would have had had she been an ordained priest. The story of her struggle to follow her vocation within the existing religious framework is told in an article in this number.)

Seen, however, against the total background, political, moral and spiritual attempts by clerics to discriminate against women are, over the long run, a side issue. What is important now is to consider again the question with which we started: what is a church?

We have assumed that our definition of a church must be wide enough to include groups existing or emerging within the

Communist world, and to include also the Chicago demonstrators. This assertion must now be justified—though at this stage and here we can obviously only justify it in a rough and ready way. First, we can interpret the common antithesis between “Church and State”, “Church and World”, as expressing the notion that the people who form or participate in a church have some primary loyalty which is not only to the secular institutions of their society. This very much needs saying just now, since the most current sociological view is that a church just expresses the values of these same institutions in religious terms. It provides ritual practices which supply occasions for the public reinforcement of these values, and religion is thus seen as a conservative element in society, helping it to tick on in conformity with existing rules. But this is a view which could only fit a highly tribal form of religion in a highly tribal form of static society (Dorothy Emmet moreover, in the new serial which she is writing for this quatrain, will be querying whether it even fits there. We also hope in the text number to put this general question more into a context and to give it more detail by having a foursome dialogue on “Empirical Tests of a Church”).

To go back: we have described a church as having a loyalty not only to secular institutions; let us say that it combines a primal vision and an institutional embodiment. The institutional embodiment is all too likely to follow the tendency of all human organizations to get run by a self-perpetuating conservative hierarchy, preoccupied with the problems of keeping the show going, maintaining its position *vis-à-vis* the rest of society, and in the process losing the spontaneity which would prevent it from getting fixated in its own stereotypes. On the other hand, people who have caught the original primal vision, or some new one—and the examination of it in this number gives reason to think there is to some extent a new primal vision even in the strange and officially suspect “Church of Scientology”—will find themselves impelled to pull the official institutions up by the roots; to change the rules and particularly the decision procedures by which they have come to operate.

So, to take again our example of the Communist World: on the one hand we continue to see the hardening of the Marxist Church, with its dogma and power politics, and on the other hand we are seeing emerge new versions of the primal Marxist vision of an equalitarian non-acquisitive kind of society (a humanist rather than a materialist Marxism). And, taking again the demonstrators in Chicago, were they not trying to recall the primal vision of American

Democracy—of “a nation dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal”—against what their organized practices of party politics have made of it?

Now, people surging up and rediscovering a “primal vision” may well seem crude to those who are within the securities of established institutional forms, and it will be said that there are worldly lessons about how the world works that they have not learnt. People will see the anarchic side of their behaviour and miss its integrity and courage. Their behaviour will look like a collapse of civilization, a swing down.

And this puts us in a position to state our initial basic hypothesis, which must underlie all deep analysis of this question : *world civilization taken as a whole is not swinging down: it is swinging up*. This has already been postulated by Teilhard de Chardin—see the article in this number. In the future we hope to discuss and justify it further. But meanwhile, and until the new civilization has more fully come, the gap between anarchic vision and institutional (ecclesiastical and political) non-vision makes it difficult to see where any “church” is. For the church will be where the vision is—if once this can find its institutional embodiment. And if and when it does, then we shall see the beginnings of the new coming civilization.

Meanwhile, what do we all do now?—“we” including here democratic-communist Czechs, Anglican women communicants, Catholic Liberals, anti-war-in-Vietnam hippies. Flight, evasion, guerrilla resistance, open confrontation, martyrdom, schism—how and when should each of these be tried?

One more narrowly ecclesiastical question which must be asked is why, given the Papal Encyclical and the Lambeth reiterated non-action, do we not get the phenomenon of “Lay Power”? We have got Black Power, Student Power, and (as another grass-roots movement) Democratic-Communist Power. Why not, in the corresponding ecclesiastical setting, Lay Power? Why in particular do the women sit down under the treatment they are given? And what about the young to whom these restrictions, *de jure* and *de facto*, are totally alien?

Our answer to this (this is our second hypothesis) is that *they are not rebelling in the ecclesiastical setting because they have gone away*. Many have gone into the equalitarian milieu of the scientific humanist exploration. Others are turning to other forms of religious search. Scientology is one of the places they are going to. Thanks to the ineptitude of the Ministry of Health (the same Ministry which

smear the book *Sans Everything*) a small-scale but official persecution has been launched in the name of the taxpayer against the Church of Scientology. This has given some of us connected with *T. to T.* the duty of finding out more about it, and the article in this number records some observations which have not, so far as we know, been made already in the national press. Its critics say that Scientology is in a way a caricature of other more serious places to which people are turning, but its growth shows how strongly they feel the need to get away from the "neolithic" churches. Other Westerners are turning East (some of the correspondence in this number illustrates this); hippies and psychedelics are turning to whatever promises an assured entrance into mystical experience; Yoga, with its psycho-somatic skills, is becoming a world-wide movement. Other people are going underground while trying to remain in their own churches: there are reports of lay celebration and ritual equality within a Catholic underground. The church hierarchies in their ecclesiastical islands have made a fundamental misjudgment on all this: what has been thought of as "the lunatic fringe" is now turning into the essential stream.

\* \* \*

In spite of all this, we believe that the idea of a church—that idea which in the narrower sense, is after all specific to Christianity—does in fact point towards the emergence of an orientation which could (in Pope John's words) fulfil the deepest desires and the highest ideals of the human race. But the Christian Churches will have to undergo a total transformation—even the death of what our writer on Teilhard de Chardin calls "neolithic forms"—if they are ever to have a resurrection.

\* \* \*

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\* \* \*

We apologise to readers, and especially to our friends in the New Atlantis Foundation, for having referred in the editorial in the last number to the article on Adler as notes of a lecture given by Adler. It was of course notes of a lecture *on* Adler given by Dimitrije Mitrinović. This was correctly stated in the table of contents and in the introductory note to the article, but we slipped up in the editorial.

We also apologize for the lateness of this number, which is owing to causes outside our control.

# Dialogue between Carl Friedrich and Martin:

## Two Scientists Talk about “Spirit”

---

*Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Hamburg; Martin Garstens, University of Maryland and Office of Naval Research, Washington.*

*In a preliminary discussion it was agreed that three topics came up and the two participants wondered whether they were related. One was the question of “reductionism”—whether physics could cover all knowledge; another was the place of religion; the third was the ethical responsibility of the scientist.*

**Carl Friedrich:** I think each of these three questions are connected, because my view about reductionism is a strange mixture of ideas about physics and ideas about religion and other things, and may very well end up with religion.

**Martin:** It seems to me that the three questions are connected, because reductionists tend to limit their experiences in such a way as to make it impossible to cross over from one domain of experience to another. They have reduced everything to such a small area that they don't understand anything outside it. But if so, there is a difficulty of communication which also underlies the problem of whether people with different religious backgrounds can join together.

To recognize that science has certain ethical implications is to recognize that it has connections with the rest of our experience. But there are people who practice science, the reductionists, who think that it is an activity which is automatically suitable for settling every kind of question. So the three topics are intimately connected with each other.

**Carl Friedrich:** I would agree that probably the psychological reasons for people being reductionists is just that they wish to be shielded from some reality by saying that it does not exist.

On the other hand I feel now that philosophically there is far more to reductionism than I thought when I was young and I am no longer afraid that if the statements of a well-formulated reductionism were true, it would do any harm to my religious and moral convictions.

**Martin:** How would you define a well-formulated reductionism ?

**Carl Friedrich:** Let me first try to do so in a rather narrow field, that is, in biology. In biology there has been a classical controversy between what were called “mechanism” and “vitalism”. The mechanists said that the laws of physics certainly held for organisms since organisms consist of the same inorganic matter, and so it must be possible by applying these laws to explain the phenomena of life. The vitalists said that this was impossible, and it is necessary to admit either (as they said in earlier times) some other factor or (as they may be inclined to say now) some other laws.

**Martin:** The other factors being entelechies?

**Carl Friedrich:** Yes. Now it is my personal impression that there is no known biological fact which would make vitalism empirically necessary. Moreover I think that no value would be violated by admitting so-called mechanism once you realize that the physical laws to be applied are the laws of quantum theory, or the laws of some theory which is even more non-classical than the quantum theory.

On the empirical question one would have to discuss the facts about life in detail, and we can't do this now. The second is the strict philosophical question. To answer it, first I ask why there should be a set of laws other than those of quantum theory. I believe that if there is to be a set of strict laws at all that we call the laws of physics, they must have some very general origin, and I am inclined to put that under the Kantian thesis that the laws of physics must derive from the conditions of the possibility of experience. But that's a long story. If it's so, then so far as there is objective experience about living things—that is so far as we can make experiments about them, and predict what will happen to them, to that extent the predictions made by quantum theory will be correct. But this does not imply that human beings consist of so-called materialistic atoms because I think that there is nothing that consists of materialistic atoms. The concept of the particle is itself just a description of a connection which exists between phenomena, and if I may jump from a very cautious and skilled language into strict metaphysical expression, I see no reason why what we call matter should not be spirit. If I put it in terms of traditional metaphysics, matter is spirit as far as spirit is not known to be spirit.

**Martin:** You seem to me to see no difficulty in switching from your original statement of reductionism to what is almost the opposite position, which no reductionist would tolerate at any cost. The whole terminology seems to have changed when you say that

things are manifestations of the spirit. The term "reductionism" would seem not to be applicable any more.

**Carl Friedrich:** This may be so; I am certainly not eager to call myself a reductionist. My point is that I am not afraid of reducing phenomena about life by a description in which human beings are considered to be systems which obey the laws of physics; but it would be a physics of the future not physics as interpreted today. Physics neither implies nor excludes its object being, in essence, spiritual. If this possibility is not excluded, I have no knowledge which would boost any wish that biology should not be reducible to physics. I might be very cautious and I might try to build up two defence lines, one in physics and another one in biology, but I don't really believe in this sort of caution. I think that if the things with which physics is obviously concerned—wonderful things like crystals and stars—are to be reduced to little bricks of matter, then so much is lost of the divine universe that it's not worth-while to fight for the rest. But if we think that the universe as we know it in space and time—this so-called "material universe"—might be a way in which a spiritual reality appears, then I would not be afraid of reducing all laws to one set of laws which we would then probably call laws of physics.

**Martin:** I agree with you, if we envisage the growth of physics sufficiently to explain all we want to know in biology. But at this stage, making use of the concepts of physics we have at the present time, we will become materialistic in trying to explain biology in terms of too-simple notions.

**Carl Friedrich:** As a natural reaction to this you can have an equally narrow spiritualism. If you say that you can only understand man by starting from his relationship to the spiritual, then there is the danger that the material reality is just ignored. Human beings can die of cancer and can live under endogenic depression and can kill each other, and these things are done either by means of material tools or under the influence of some material chemical agent, or whatever it may be. All this doesn't at all correspond to the picture of man as just some lofty spiritual being. This picture must be destroyed, and this can't be done by demonology—saying that there are bad spirits. I am afraid that those who try to start by making use of the spiritualistic terms know less of reality than the reductionists do. What I try to do is to frame concepts which would admit of speaking about these grim facts which can be understood causally in a way that does not separate them off from



the rest, by attributing them, for example, to the influence of black demons. For I think one might say equally well that the positive things in life are closely connected with causality, as, e.g. everyone knows who has been a successful educator. Then the only question is whether causality is all there is to be said, and there I would say no, I don't think so. I think causality itself is a means of thought, a tool of thought which is connected with the ability of making general statements about something. As far as we can described things unambiguously we need causality, and as far as we succeed in that the result will be science. But I would say that there is a complementarity between wholeness and unambiguous description. You cannot describe the whole, the totality of life in an unambiguous manner; and I would say that there is another form of description which starts from things like virtue, moral values, the will of God : and in this description you will probably not use science. But it will be possible to show that it doesn't contradict science and science doesn't contradict it.

**Martin:** I think you yourself tend to isolate these domains, but from my point of view it is a religious activity continuously to see what the connections are. The great danger the world is in today is that there are isolated domains of activity, and if we don't make connections soon we face a catastrophe in morals. In the process of continually questioning and looking into the meanings not only of physical science but also of inner life we begin to see connections. I think that it will be due to a lack of religious feeling if any of this activity ceases, because in so far as it ceases it means that we are doomed to go on with our isolated domains of experience, both within ourselves and with respect to other people. It is essential continually to look for ties.

**Carl Friedrich:** We agree that we should see the connections and take them very seriously. I don't deny the possibility that there may turn out to be some sort of real cut or break between physics and biology. But I believe that scientifically it is far more fruitful to start from the hypothesis that there is continuity between them, in the sense that we do not need any fundamental laws except those of the quantum theory, and that as far as we understand the phenomena scientifically we understand them in terms of quantum theory.

**Martin:** I take it that your point is that unless we accept the continuity we shall not stumble on the new, really deep ideas in physics.

**Carl Friedrich:** This is important, because those reductionists who try to reduce life to physics usually try to reduce it to primitive physics, not to good physics. Good physics is broad enough to contain life, to encompass life in its description, since good physics, by making full use of the notion of Hilbert space, allows a vast field of possible descriptions. There is no reason why living beings should be compared to primitive machines which don't make use of feed-back. The importance of feed-back has been discovered now by us, and so now we design machines to make use of feed-back. These are just some examples of refined descriptions that are possible within the frame of physics.

**Martin:** Would man be able to make a man?

**Carl Friedrich:** My personal opinion is that probably it is not possible, but that if it were possible, it ought not to be done. Perhaps our feeling that we ought not to do it reflects itself into the wishful thinking that it might be impossible. I find it quite difficult clearly to say why we ought not to make a man, even if it were possible. I think that the reason is that the attitude of our technical age allows us to make what we like and then destroy it if it is not interesting to us. But a man we must love, and so if we make a man it would not be permissible to destroy him. Moreover the man we had made might, for instance, be morally bad or sick, so much so that it would not really be endurable to be such a man. In which case it would be wrong to have made him.

**Martin:** I think that if what you've made begins to resemble a real person, and you begin to tamper with his feelings, then you will find the same moral issues arise as if you were doing this with a real person. If you object to tampering with people's moral outlooks by physical means—going into their brains and seeing if you can change their emotions and their feelings towards their fellow men—then you must object to such manipulation of a man you made artificially.

**Carl Friedrich:** While we're on this field, let me say that I think it is extremely difficult to say what is permitted and what is not permitted—what is to be done and what is not to be done. A positive ethic of science is as difficult as any positive ethic always has been. Perhaps it is more difficult because the long experience of mankind as to how things work out is not available. However, there are some principles which are quite clear, or might be made quite clear. For instance, the oath of Hippocrates in the medical profession says that the physician promises to use his power, the

power his medical knowledge gives him, only to help or promote life and not to violate or kill life. This ancient rule is still considered to be the fundamental rule of medical ethics. I know very well that in practice it is violated in very many cases, but the fact that there is much cynicism in the medical profession does not prevent everyone in principle recognizing that it is the right rule, even though in some cases it is difficult to know whether it should be applied literally. Take euthanasia, for instance. In a particular case it might be loving your neighbour more to admit that he should die instead of forcing him to live an intolerable life; so the basic idea is the same. Now I would say that this oath ought to apply to the scientist and the technologist precisely as much as to the medical man. This is a very simple statement, but this is what I really feel.

**Martin:** But in view of the special cases—you have admitted there might be a case for euthanasia—might it not be right to change the rules? The rules themselves are not formulated too accurately now. Sometimes re-formulation is needed.

**Carl Friedrich:** Well, it is true that the positive rules we have in medicine may be too narrow, while on the other hand in many other fields, and even in some branches of medicine, there is the opposite difficulty that there are no rules. Let me take an example very near to my own experience—atomic weapons. Let's start in a purely legalistic manner. It cannot really be convincingly argued that atomic weapons are not forbidden while poison gas is forbidden if the reason given is only that poison gas was known at the time of the Hague and Geneva Conventions while atomic weapons were not known; if they had been known they would most certainly have been forbidden. Although we have set up some positive rules in the past for particular cases, the general ethical problem of what I may do to my neighbour has not been covered by any of our rules. And this consideration ought to be as important in science as the consideration of promoting the finding of truth.

**Martin:** Whatever the rules are, it may turn out that the ruling is too rigid. There is always the problem of recognizing new facts about our society and of transforming the rules to meet different situations.

**Carl Friedrich:** There is another point and a most important one. The development of modern scientific technology makes it clear that we cannot consider these problems from the limited

outlook of individual ethics, ethics for the individual, not taking social situations into account.

**Martin:** An individual has a dilemma if his nation is at war.

**Carl Friedrich:** Yes, indeed. Take the atomic bomb again: I have been close to it. I have never actually worked on a bomb that was made, but in Germany during the last war I was working on atomic energy. It just turned out that we were unable to make the bombs, and in this way we were saved from the real problem. This was good luck or bad luck or whatever you like to call it, and our American colleagues were in a different situation.

**Martin:** Good luck for us.

**Carl Friedrich:** Yes. So my conclusion with respect to the atomic bomb is that you cannot handle the problem of making atomic weapons or not on a purely individualistic basis. If a single physicist says "I am not going to make atomic weapons" (a position which I myself publicly took after the war) this may seem quite meaningless because there are many physicists and we don't need all physicists for making atomic bombs. Moreover, there are many other horrible weapons and the atomic bomb is not so much just the one bad thing in the world as the symbol of a type of development. The true solution to the problem of weapons is not the abolition of the atomic bomb but the abolition of war, and there is no other solution. War has always been an evil, but it was an evil we were not able to avoid. Now we are in a situation in which our survival depends upon our overcoming the evil, and this may be the moment in our history when something may be done about it which is really decisive.

**Martin:** This would apply to nationalism too.

**Carl Friedrich:** Yes.

**Martin:** One could call nationalism an individualistic point of view. But let's come back to the question of matter and spirit. You will remember that I said that there was a narrow kind of reductionism that tended to make people materialist in the popular sense—only interested in making money and similar material things.

**Carl Friedrich:** Logically I see not the slightest connection between thinking that physics explains everything and thinking that you must make money, because there are two different meanings of the word "materialism". Remember the materialism of the

school of Epicurus who led a highly refined and slightly ascetic life and who was theoretically a materialist, and whose opposition to religion was on the ground that it induced people to be cruel, to be dogmatic, to be stupid, whereas materialism made people free to be interested in thought, in truth, and in true values.

I am included to say that there is a good meaning to materialism, and that there are two extremes—both of which are wrong—a narrow reductionism and a narrow spiritualism which ignores the rude facts of life such as sexuality on the grounds that these are not “spiritual”. I would say that the narrow reductionism doesn’t know what physics is and the narrow spiritualism doesn’t know what the spirit is.

**Martin:** What is “spirit”? For me “spirit” is associated with a feeling that overwhelms us or arises in us. No matter how much insight we have gotten into the life around us in various types of systems and types of interpretation, every once in a while we have the feeling that the nature of things is so deep that all our words and ideas have only scratched the surface. I think it is legitimate to use the term “spiritual” to express the feeling that there is so much more to our existence than anything we have ever thought or ever said or ever learned. Of course in this form it doesn’t lead to any specific activities, except that we are led to a feeling of great humility towards other people, since presumably the rest of the world has the feeling too.

**Carl Friedrich:** I would try to describe spirit more or less empirically, and refer to the experience on which the word “spirit” rests. I would say that this is essentially a religious experience. In religious experience a man who knows himself and who is accustomed to see his ability to know himself in terms of mind or consciousness, faces a reality which he cannot deny, a reality which is certainly not of the nature of what he calls matter but also not of the nature of what he calls mind. It seems somehow superior to mind. One might hope in the end to understand mind as some derivate of the spirit, but not the other way round, I think the first experience of spirit is one of *awe*, if not of *horror*. Thus in the Old Testament you find that whenever God’s presence is faced by a man, the man’s first feeling is terror. God’s presence is not just a friendly background to what we see, but something absolutely different from what we are accustomed to which also contains an ethical element. The foundations of our whole life—personal as well as social—are shaken as soon as we face spirit.

**Martin:** I take it that this is much more than getting satisfaction out of your particular form of religion, which is what most people associate with the word “spiritual”.

**Carl Friedrich:** Well, “satisfaction” is in a way a term that shows that people have learned to live under the guidance not of the spirit, but of some mollified image of the spirit.

**Martin:** A person may have grown up in some local and limited religion which may have given him satisfaction, but he has to be prepared for the satisfaction to be broken.

**Carl Friedrich:** In many cases the spiritual traditions are just used to protect the lives which we wish to go on with, but I think that spirit and truth must be taken together.

**Martin:** Different religious traditions are now facing each other and must learn to live with each other. At present religions have large man-made aspects in them, and therefore presumably are not divine in that respect. Provided the man-made elements don't clash, they ought to be able to live together.

**Carl Friedrich:** Yes: and as far as they clash, there is a challenge. But I think it is necessary not to draw too sharp a line between what is divine and what is man-made, for frequently what is man-made would be described as a result of historical growth. There are many elements in our lives which are man-made in the sense that there have been human beings who lived without them. Nevertheless I would be prepared to accept that they are divine in the sense that history has grown under the impact of spirit; that history is somehow itself divinely self-made.

**Martin:** Do you mean that the history of the world at the present time is divinely made?

**Carl Friedrich:** Consider this fact. There has been a tendency of conflict in religions—and certainly in the Christian tradition—between those who revere the saints and their images (the ikons) and those who feel that all this should be destroyed because it detracts from true religion. The latter say that these pictures are man-made and not divine, whereas the former claim that they are divine, and ask how you can revere God if you don't revere the image. This is one of the genuine clashes between two traditions in religion each one of which has its great merits. And I think it would be dangerous to take the view that one of them is just man-made and the other one is what is God's will.

**Martin:** Aren't you describing just two different types of person ?

**Carl Friedrich:** Yes, and I think God may very well have willed that there should be the two types of person. Therefore we shouldn't eliminate one of the two, but the two should learn to love their neighbour, and that this is also the will of God.

**Martin:** But then aren't we now plunged directly into the social problem that I have been stressing all along, because historically we know that some of the largest mass-murders in history have occurred because of differences on precisely points like revering the saints or revering their images. Now if this is divinely given then it's just too bad for the divine, in my estimation.

**Carl Friedrich:** Yes, indeed.

**Martin:** It seems to me that this conflict in religions is man-made and is a purely social problem, and it seems to me that our major problems are differences that arise from man-made developments, and that these things have to be examined rationally. I think you have now admitted they are man-made and that they have given rise to these tremendous clashes. We have to modify our interpretation of the divine here.

**Carl Friedrich:** This is not exactly my way of looking at it. Once we admit the term "divine" at all, we have to admit that God permits great evils, and I do not think that this strict division in which we say all that's good must come from God, and certainly what's bad comes from man or is man-made, is really illuminating. I fully agree that we have to analyse all that rationally, because I think that the light of reason also comes from God. And I think that the great clashes in the past are examples of—let us say—the immensely dangerous nature of the divine. And when I said before that to face spirit will strike you with horror I meant partly to connect this with the fact that to face the spirit means to learn that there is a real possibility of dying. As it says in the Bible "The man who sees God will die". This also means that when people have discovered that the divine reality craves some acts of real devotion, full sacrifice and transformation of the world, this may well have induced them to become far more brutal than they would have been without that. This is one of the dangers contained in the religious reality.

**Martin:** Well, this isn't clear to me. It seems to me that the most direct approach to the divine and to God is to assume that God never meant all the evil that has occurred in the world. We

don't even know what God is; so I think it's already too restrictive a definition of God to say that He wanted to allow evil to be in the world. I would like to go back to my definition of being spiritual as having infinite humility as to what we really understand; to say anything so definite about God is to restrict the degree of this humility. I don't think we really know what God is. It's something we have to assume. But it seems too much to me to translate something about which we have only an assumption into directives as to how society should guide itself historically, and thereby to justify the tremendous amount of friction and violence which occur historically by means of an interpretation which humility should prevent us from making. We are very much safer in truly appreciating the fact that we are in a sense infinitely ignorant.

The history of man from the ancient past to the present has been that of continuous destruction and slaughter. Isn't it enough for man to live at peace with himself? Does he have to build armies and means of destruction? Are those things that have to be done? Isn't it a far better solution to say that man should build a minimal amount on the earth—just a minimal amount so that he survives and he can appreciate the beauties of things around him and perhaps the arts and so on, and not go around telling other people how they should live?

**Carl Friedrich:** Well, I was only trying to show how even the horrors of religions which I fully know and hate are what is to be expected once the immense power of God really enters the mixed affairs of human life. I say that God is a reality, and that if we are truly humble, then some of these humble human beings will—because of their humility—be open to God and will discover the immense power of God and they will learn, in their humility, that they are asked to do things which completely change their own lives and completely change the world even if this implies the danger of becoming violent and self-destructive and all that. This can even be seen rationally; we do not need to go to a religious tradition or a religious experience to see it. There is this self-destroying nature in our own rational activity directed towards good. For instance, we have had the immense success of medicine which has led to the impending catastrophe of starvation all over the world. That means we cannot just say everyone should be what he feels to be good, because the interlinkage of things, which can be causally understood, is such that we cannot make a change in one part of life because we think it is good, and leave unchanged the rest. If we wish to change the rest we must change social systems; and if we wish to



abolish war, we may have to fight fiercely against those who wish to retain it. The very best way of conducting such a struggle may be just in renouncing violence in the Quaker way; but one should not be surprised if this way of dealing with violence elicits violence in others, as we have seen in the case of Martin Luther King. King is a very good example of the use of non-violent means to change the world; but the very fact that he changed the world—which was indeed necessary and good—induced violence.

Human nature is not such as to enable us just by being humble and gentle and friendly to avoid the fact that the necessity of thorough-going change shall lead to very violent events.

**Martin:** I was thinking not merely of humility in behaviour but also intellectual humility.

**Carl Friedrich:** My point is that, whereas humility in respect of what I know is asked for, there are cases in which you or I know certain things, and it would not be humility but fear not to act. True humility will not lead to renouncing actions about which we feel certain enough to say “This must be done”, even though we must be prepared to accept that in the end we were in error. And this again leads to these tensions; and I think that all tensions can be resolved in true love, but the attitude of a sort of a sceptical agnostic humility is not true love, it is just an element which is very good if it is rightly applied.

**Martin:** There shouldn't be any conflict between such humility and true love.

# Teilhard and the New Theology\*

*Jerome Perlinski*

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The diversity of sources for new theological speculation calls for emphasis and even perhaps an exclamation of bewilderment. Emphasis because it underlines the fundamental health and inherent honesty in an intellectual movement unafraid to accept lessons from all of reality and from any area in reality. And bewilderment at the courage shown by contemporary theologians for daring a synthesis among such heterogeneous and even opposing world-views as those of the existentialists, the pragmatists, and Teilhard de Chardin. Whether deliberate or not, it is significant that this latter occupies a middle position on the programme. For while the existentialists emphasize man's fundamental metaphysical freedom in the face of an absurd universe (symbolized best in Camus's portrait of the straining, sweating Sisyphus) and the pragmatists accent man's building capacities for the present and his actual response to current, pressing, and real needs, Teilhard offers a vision of the universe which is neither entirely free nor entirely unfree. Perhaps too French to be able to understand well and appreciate American pragmatism, he was nonetheless withering in his *Journal* remarks on the existentialists. For him, while the existentialists had grasped at the reality of the permanence of risk, they had, in effect, denied the reality of evolution. Man is born in a universe already ontologized and engaged. Man *appears* into a universe which has already begun and will continue. Everyone is not free to create his own universe, rather he must find and recognize his place in a cosmogenesis whose axis disappears below in utter multiplicity and appears ahead in the Universal Christ.

In any case, the three movements do share in some way in the building of what is now known as the "new theology" and it will be our task to explore what part a French palaeontologist-priest may have had in giving it impetus. For this purpose, I propose five areas of concern : (1) an extremely brief summary of the Teilhardian message; (2) some general concepts which the new theology may

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have taken from Teilhard; (3) some general concepts which the new theology may find difficult or may refuse in Teilhard; (4) some examples of traditional theological concepts in the Teilhardian framework; and (5) some general conclusions.

### *The Teilhardian Vision*

Perceptible already in the earliest philosophico-theological writings of the first World War period and appearing more and more clearly is Teilhard's passion to heal the religious schizophrenia which he saw sapping the strength and wasting the vital energy of our age. In one of his most important unpublished manuscripts, *Comment je crois*, he described the essence of his life-long attempt :

“The originality of my belief is that it has its roots in two areas of life usually considered antagonistic. By education and intellectual formation, I belong to the ‘children of heaven’. But by temperament and by professional studies I am a ‘child of the Earth’. Thus placed by life at the heart of two worlds of which I know through everyday experience the theory, the language, the sentiments, I erected no interior partitions. Rather I let the apparently contrary influences react with full liberty, one upon the other, within me. Now, at the end of this operation, after thirty years consecrated to the pursuit of interior unity, I have the impression that a synthesis has naturally worked itself out between the two currents which so attract me”.

The Teilhardian vision, then, is nothing more than a possible solution to the dilemma which has faced Western man ever since the decline of the Classical world-view of harmony, and more particularly since the scientific revolution of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

On the one side, all the authority and weight of almost 400 years of scientific discovery and experimentation culminates in the awareness of the reality of evolution: every object, every item, every particle, as well as the universe itself, has a story, is born, is a history. Everything appears in time, is connected by time, and thus finds its identity only by being measured in cosmic terms. This evolutionary process is captured in the Teilhardian law of complexity-consciousness, which, despite its deceptively difficult title, merely asserts that the universe advances along the lines of least probability, that is, toward a state of extreme consciousness and liberty paralleled by an appropriate state of complexification. And all of this in an ordered progression characterized by the passage of several important thresholds which announce the appearance of a new form in

the universe. Lest the terms frighten us into dismissing the real message of Teilhard's vision, we might summarize the present zoological state of the world as follows. Physically and exteriorly, following the two laws of thermodynamics (that of the Conservation and Dissipation of Energy) the universe is dying. Specifically, the demands of entropy are such that in every chemical reaction a tiny quantum of energy is lost in the form of heat, so that, physicists tell us (sometimes reassure us) the sun will gradually grow cold. But, physically and interiorly, the movement of universal energy finds another expression in the growth of complexity. If we are to look for the true axis of evolution it is only at this level that we will discover the key. It would be absurd if the universe were to commit suicide by choosing those reactions and combinations which will call forth the most energy: thus eating itself away. But in fact, the picture of evolution describes just such an event, for as we watch simple atoms give way to molecules and molecules to immensely complex cellular formations and higher up toward the development of nervous systems and brains, we are forced to admit that another current of energy—the contrary to entropy—operates in the cosmogenesis or evolving universe. This is psychic energy which, although appearing in a nebulous, analogous, and utterly attenuated manner in lower forms, finally clearly bursts out when evolution crosses the noospheric threshold, that is, when man appears on earth.

What Teilhard is affirming in this scientific adventure is that there is a continuous line of development from the simplest energy-forms to man, that evolution asserts a continuum by reason of the "within" of things, that is, by reason of their consciousness, their interiority. But a further question is of even more direct importance. Has evolution come to an end in man? Without burdening ourselves here with the technicalities of the Teilhardian dialectic on this point, suffice it to say that the answer is in the negative. To make any sense at all, evolution must continue and it *follows the same law of complexity-consciousness* which cosmogenesis has followed heretofore. The indications are abundant that the next threshold is relatively near (remember here that Teilhard is speaking in terms of millions of years), a threshold which will usher in "super-humanity", that is totalized man: humanity on a species-level whose nation is the universe, whose concern is "being more" rather than "having more", and whose ultimate destiny is reaching the point of convergence where the universe will find its final achievement—the Point Omega.

Point Omega is nothing more than the focus of the cone of time, the target at which the arrow of evolution is directed: the personal, transcendent-immanent which makes all of cosmogenesis worthwhile.

Thus the zoological state of the world is a view shared wholly or in part by many contemporary humanists and marxists, and the religious state of the world is also as precise and convincing, and it is a view which we have little need to insist upon. It begins with an initial fall of man and ends with his finding grace and salvation again in the personal vision of an unique, triune, transcendent God. In the Christian tradition, this God made himself incarnate in his son as a means for human redemption. And this son, Jesus the Christ, established a Church which by means of sacraments and the Word would carry on his living presence until all should be joined again—above—in the Father.

The religious schizophrenia of the contemporary intelligent man becomes obvious : Whom ought I to worship? The God ahead, or as Teilhard used to say, the God of the *en-avant*? this Point Omega which all of science seems to necessitate? Or the God above, *en-haut* who is the God of the Scriptures, of Tradition, of the Churches, of Western and Eastern religion alike?

It is no secret that Teilhard's answer solves the dilemma by identifying Point Omega with the fullness of Christ, the *pleroma tou christou*, or the Universal Christ. And it is no secret, nor would it be surprising to state, that such an identification creates problems which are not easily dealt with by contemporary theologians.

#### *Some Concepts which the New Theology may have taken from Teilhard*

It is my suspicion that less of the new theology comes from Teilhard de Chardin than we are usually inclined to suppose. And this for two reasons: (1) many aspects of the Teilhardian vision are not exclusive to him. Most obvious is the concept of duration, first applied successfully and methodically to biology by Wallace and Darwin, discovered in philosophy by Bergson, and applied to the theory of science by Whitehead. The science of history was born in the eighteenth century and was already well on its way to maturity in the nineteenth with its great practitioners, von Ranke, Macaulay, Carlyle and others. The recognition of the psychological state of universal man was recognized by Freud in his *Civilizations and its Discontents*. And the placing of man among the phenomena of nature instead of leaving him outside was recognized independently by Julian Huxley early in the twentieth century, as he himself asserts in his introduction to the English translation of Teilhard's *Phenomenon of Man*. And so on down the list of what are often called Teilhardian discoveries. But the true genius of Teilhard lies in his synthetic vision. "In all my works, I am convinced of being no more than a sort of sound-box of what people around me

are thinking.” “I think that the circumstances (internal and external) of my life have led me to strongly amplify certain intellectual or even mystic tendencies which are everywhere ‘in the air’ at this moment”. And again, in 1952 he wrote “I see very clearly that my force . . . is not because of what I have ‘invented’ whatever it may be, but simply because of the fact that I find myself conveniently resonating to a certain vibration, to a certain human and religious note which is now everywhere in the air and where people are finding and recognizing themselves”. (2) The publication of many of Teilhard’s most important theological works have not yet appeared even in the French, let alone in the Germanic and Anglo-Saxon lands. Thus, his theological position is most often deduced (with a very few exceptions as those monographs of Georges Crespy, Henri de Lubac, Bruno de Solages, and Christopher Mooney) from the *Phenomenon of Man* and the *Divine Milieu*, neither of which works is intended for the theologian nor the convinced Christian. What impact the publication within the next few years of his essays, *The Evolution of Chastity*, *Comment je crois*, *Introduction to the Christian Life*, *The Heart of the Matter* and many others will have on the world of theology, I have no way of telling. But we may suspect that it will be great.

However that may be, I believe that one can detect at least five general concepts accepted pretty universally by the new theologians which may have found their roots in the Teilhardian vision. First of these is universalism. This is the awareness on the religious scene of what Marx and the marxists had long been aware of: that the truest reality of man is that he is a social being, that he is not alone, that his sphere of ultimate human concern is not himself nor his family nor his nation, but his species. The first pages of the *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (Gaudium et Spes)* which was the long-awaited result of debate on the Second Vatican Council’s Schema 13, are saturated with the concept of universalism: “Therefore, the council focuses its attention on the world of men, the whole human family along with the sum of those realities in the midst of which it lives”. “Therefore, this sacred synod, proclaiming the noble destiny of man and championing the godlike seed which has been sown in him, offers to mankind the honest assistance of the Church in fostering that brotherhood of all men which corresponds to this destiny of theirs”. “Today, the human race is involved in a new stage of history”. “Although the world of today has a very vivid awareness of its unity and of how one man depends on another in needful solidarity . . .”. And so on. The council emphasizes the community of man which is its own

measure. Every writer in the new theology is now painfully aware that the prison experience of Dietrich Bonhoeffer was not an isolated example, but that indeed the agony of the Church in Germany is the agony of humankind.

A second concept is that of evolution. The Teilhardian influence is here less in doubt for the whole "underground" church of the 1930's through the 1950's was aware of the Teilhard "case" (which we shall allude to later). While evolution was in the air, it somehow managed to escape the churches and entered in its most dramatic way, by means of clandestine reports, exiles, and warnings. In the Roman Catholic world, nothing stirred the study of evolution as much as its semi-condemnation in the papal letter *Humani Generis* of 1950. On this level, the Roman Catholic community had been more susceptible to the theory of evolution than the Protestant community, tied down as this latter was to a literal interpretation of the Scriptures and a confessional intransigence against modern science which has not yet today, in certain areas of southern United States, lost its capacity for hindering the harmonious progress of science and theology. Teilhard showed that such a harmony can be achieved without compromise, without concordism, but with a genuine and fecund coherence.

Thirdly, wherever there is shown awareness of the cosmic extensions of human and divine acts, I believe such a concept may be attributed to the influence of Teilhard. Here the cosmic extensions of personhood, an idea usually associated with Emmanuel Mounier and the philosophy of personalism, is certainly to be attributed to a Teilhardian influence as the published correspondence between Teilhard and Mounier exhibits. At the same time, the cosmic vision of the universe and the cosmic dimensions of Christ are already present in the letters of Paul and of John and emphasis in this regard had never been lost in the theologies of Orthodoxy and certain Western schools. But again, it was Teilhard who brought them to light in a new and challenging way. If not for him, perhaps the cosmic Christ would have been left in the pages of exegetes like Bonsirven and Lucien Cerfaux.

Again, wherever there is shown awareness that the human phenomenon is a phenomenon among others, that it can be treated by the same scientific laws which govern the rest of the universe—this I believe can be attributed to the influence of Teilhard. On this account, the wholehearted acceptance of psychoanalysis as a legitimate and fruitful experience by—let us admit—a mere handful of churchmen, most prominent of whom, is the Père Lemercier of Cuernavaca, is quite definitely of Teilhardian inspiration. Because

the human person is seen and accepted as a zoological reality, his higher states of consciousness can be systematically studied and exploited. Human consciousness can no longer be treated as an epiphenomenon—too sacred to be tampered with or too fragile to take seriously. Mention might also be made here of the new psychedelic churches, notably that of Dr. Timothy Leary, whose interest in consciousness-expansion and the sense of the cosmos admittedly owes its origins to Hindu and Teilhardian mysticism.

Finally, we could observe that as early as 1946 and 1947, French priests studying at the Paris Institut Catholique were already examining some Teilhardian christological texts. This is already a generation of Teilhardian-formed clergy, whose principal emphasis lies in the preaching of the religion of the Christ. Attached to this accent on christology in the new theology is a morality which still is but a fledgling but certainly accepts wholeheartedly and unequivocally the Teilhardian embrace of matter so poetically expressed in his "Hymn to Matter". It is on this latter level, perhaps more than anywhere else, that Teilhard has made a modern impact. But it is this level which is the least tangible. I may simply affirm that my own personal contacts both in America and Europe with persons who have been quite literally transformed by either reading or speaking with Teilhard have convinced me that their numbers are considerably larger than anyone suspects. And publication figures suggest this to be true. One wonders how really to measure the fact that the 45,000 copies of the *Fenomeno Humano* (in Spanish) was sold in a single week in Mexico City.

*Some Concepts which the New Theology may find difficult or may refuse in Teilhard*

In a sense, I believe this section to be the most important, for I contend that Teilhard is a far more "radical" theologian than anyone we know today. And I am inclined to believe that there is far more in Teilhard which, when it becomes fully known and understood, will be rejected by the new theology, or will be diluted so as to become palatable to those taste buds which are traditionally nourished on orthodox safety. But Teilhard was wont to say that orthodox books are the useless books, for truth is found only by searching not by repeating what everyone knows. Hence, I doubt strongly whether theology in the immediate future will be prepared to accept the Teilhardian methodology which is in the dialectical school and is the only epistemology consonant with an evolutionary vision of the universe. Theology is the deductive school *par excellence*, its premises coming, so says traditional scholasticism, partly from



revelation and partly from science. But deduction is a closed and static system, in whose premises the conclusions are already contained. It is thus an immense tautology. Only a dialectic which proceeds in a zig-zag pattern can remain open for further possibilities. Only in the coming and going from the more known to the less known can true intellectual progress be made, can the old aristotelian categories be struck down and put in their place, and way made for really new knowledge, real advance, and real theological progress.

Perhaps the greatest single obstacle to theological advance today is not even its methodology, but its obstinate ignorance of the facts of science. The value of science is a lesson which the new theology has not learned from Teilhard, or if it has—and there are indeed signs of a few theologians who have made some steps in this direction—it has moved only with timidity and unsurety. In apparent contradiction to what was said earlier, much of the talk of evolution in theological circles is mere lip service to the demands of modern times. Most theologizing is still done in a vacuum, in complete unawareness of either the historical-scientific method (so that we still hear, as I heard recently, of a search for a “hermeneutic of conciliar documents”, i.e. an instrument for understanding another age), and the concept of man or humanity is still generally divorced from its zoological and physico-chemical grounding. Simply said, theology—even the new theology—has remained far too narrowly humanistic. But evolution will eventually prove a sterile and stultifying concept if it is accepted in a merely humanistic and/or poetic way. How many criticisms are levelled at Teilhard himself for being a mere poet by those who fail to go through the difficult task of acquainting themselves with the intricacies of the physical laws of the universe from entropy through relativity and quantum physics.

Thirdly, except for a small group of so-called “radical theologians”, few of the new theology school are willing to proclaim a “new religion”, a term which is typically and authentically Teilhardian. What is Teilhard’s new religion? It is *truly and in every sense* of the noun a *transformation* of Christianity in which the neolithic terminology of a former epoch, already quickly passing away, must be rejected, and a new religion made of “the ancient mystic waves and the newest torrent of the Sense of Evolution” be passionately embraced. Teilhard’s transformed Christianity, which in true dialectical fashion, is a real, new step, a progress, and not a re-phrasing, re-emphasis, re-discovery, or re-anything, is characterized by its pantheist, personalist and cosmic qualities. Pantheist, not

in the classical sense (Pantheism of confusion, Teilhard calls this school), wherein my personhood is lost in an all-embracing oneness, but pantheism of convergence, in which my true personhood is found by means of union with the All: St. Paul's All in all. Personalist, in which the person is recognized in its fullest cosmic dimensions and extensions, up unto the Person, Christ-Universal, who is fulfilled only when humanity has evolved to its fullest level; and cosmic, for the whole universe "groans and travails" after Christ.

It is this new religion which emphasizes what we may perhaps justly call contemporary man's greatest embarrassment, mysticism. In all of the new theology, there is a curious lack of clarity on what to do about prayer and the life of prayer. In the Roman Catholic world with which I am the most familiar, the fear and embarrassment which comes about in the most liberal circles when the problem of prayer, the inner spiritual life of man, and the mystic state is broached, is often disconcerting. What is the true goal of Christian life? To become one with God. Teilhard is unequivocal—this has been the goal of all religions, and if religion shall have any meaning, it shall continue to be the goal. But if we are here discussing religion in a secular world, you will note that there is not a single discussion devoted to the mystic life. Yet, if we were to characterize the Teilhardian theological attempt by a single word, we would be forced to use mysticism. And is this not the heart of the message of the *Divine Milieu*, that book which has brought so many to ask again the basic question of why religion at all. Secularized religion, if it is to remain religion, will have to ultimately face this question.

A final negative point. I do not believe that theology—in any confession—will accept for many years to come in any kind of official way, a God in motion, a God who evolves. But if the Christ-Omega means anything at all it means an evolution in the christic manifestation of God; it means that the immutable God of medieval Christianity is the moving God of Evolution, the great Evolver, who for the completion of the universe at which he lies at the head, has need, a real need, for human co-operation. The Pleroma cannot come at any time; it can come only when the universe has matured sufficiently to stand the union. True human co-operation in the divine act; an evolving Omega—two concepts which it will be difficult for traditional religion—even for the new theology to completely accept.

The true test of the new theology shall thus be, as Teilhard said, whether or not it can channel evolutive energy. The religion of tomorrow will be that religion which recognizes evolution, deeply,

as well as all of its implications, no matter how frightening they may at first appear in rapport with traditional religious and theological explanations of things. How do some of these implications work themselves out explicitly?

*Some Examples of Traditional Theological Concepts in the Teilhardian Framework*

Let us take for example the problem of the divinity of the historical Christ. We could dream of a Christ-universal without the support of a concrete, historical individual. But this would not be in accord with the physical structure of the universe, where all partakes of a universal characteristic, that is atomicity. For God to incarnate himself, he was born . . . as an individual. At the same time, it is incontestable that the notion of the Christ-Universal (Paul) appeared when the Man-Jesus was recognized and adored as God. To deny his divinity would be to deny two thousand years of mystical energy put at his service. Thus Teilhard's confession: "I believe in the divinity of the Infant of Bethlehem insofar and under the forms of him who is historically and biologically included in the reality of Christ-Universal".

What of Original Sin and Redemption? Nothing is more disconcerting to the modern mind than the idea of the Fall. But original sin can now be seen to identify itself with the ever-possible fall present in a world in a state of evolution. And so the Christian, rather than thinking in terms of expiation for past sins, inclines toward "construction". Rather than he who carries the sins of the world, Christ becomes he who carries and supports the weight of the world in evolution. And the Cross becomes then not a symbol of suffering, sacrifice, and expiation, but the instrument for building the earth.

And the examples could be continued throughout all of Christian dogmatics: what is the biological basis for the Eucharist and how is every communion but an episode in a single communion, one and the same process of christification? How are the Creation, Incarnation, and Redemption but three moments in the immense process of amorization by which God unites himself to the Universe? And how is sin seen to be inevitably mixed in because a part of an evolutive process of groping and expansion?

How much of this will be accepted in the future by new or any other kind of theologians I cannot say. But I can conclude the following:

- (1) Teilhard's influence has been partly mythical. It rests on his personal story of suspicion, warning, exile in China,

prohibition to publish, until his very death in 1955. In this, Teilhard shares, like Bonhoeffer, the immense prestige of fidelity to his vision and suffering for the vision. His influence is an enlightenment. The intellectual and psychological martyrdom stands as a symbol for the need for a new freedom, which, more than anything else, binds all the schools of the new theology together, and indeed is the keynote of the post-war world.

- (2) Teilhard's influence has suffered because second and third rate theologians refuse to do the hard work of really understanding and thus they express and explain only the poetic sections of Teilhard's writings.
- (3) Teilhard has been far more influential on the young caught up in a world of cynics and sceptics; in a world of increasing dangers and solutions which would have, for effect, the reduction of man to a beehive existence. It is simply not true that youth does not seek a unifying, clarifying, coherent world-vision. One is seldom born sceptic and the words of one of the most recent Beatles' songs, "Within you without you", adequately describes the cosmic feeling (whether attained through meditation or psychedelically) of the flow of life.
- (4) Teilhard and others have convinced these people of the fundamental goodness of matter and of nature. Thus has been overcome one of the greatest hurdles for a profound Christian penetration of the world since the time of Augustine. With a Teilhardian understanding of the uses of matter so as to transform and transcend matter, a Christian can finally enthusiastically embrace the world—not half-heartedly as something to do while he waits for the real life to begin in the beyond, or as a test for his heavenly home. Rather this world has actual, real, vivid and final meaning for a Teilhardian Christian as the only world he knows and can live in. Let me quickly add that I do not believe as many persons as we might wish actually believe this and are so totally convinced. It will take more than a few years to wipe out the traces of sub-manichaeism and the fear of total immersion in matter.
- (5) But, at the same time, it will probably take equally as long to have people recognize that the embrace of matter is merely the first moment in the history of our convergence with Christ-Universal. That is, Teilhard's mystical note most

often goes unheard. The world is to be embraced so as to transform it; we are the activators in the evolutionary process. It would be a grave error to plunge oneself wholly in matter and to stay there, to wallow in what it may have to offer. No; evolution is achieved through convergence which is a unifying act. The disparate parts of matter must be brought together in and through Christ the evolver. And this is really the whole point behind the Teilhardian vision.

- (6) I seriously believe that this vision is the most radical and far-seeing of the universal visions offered to us today. It is the most relevant of all the theological viewpoints because it is based upon the facts of science which are the very nourishment of the contemporary world. And I think that this fact has been recognized; Teilhard has captured the imagination of the intellectuals and the youth of the world—there is hardly a place, from the plains of middle-America to the steppes of Siberia, where he has not been quoted. But the message must yet travel to the mind of man, there to be transmitted into energy power for constructing the world.
- (7) Unless this is achieved the very heart of the Teilhardian theological view will be lost: the pleromization of the universe. As Teilhard concluded his essay on *The Christian Phenomenon* (10th May 1950):

“In the face of such a future profundity and at the present state of Anthropogenesis, it would be vain to try to determine what forms [the new religion] would take: whether it be the liturgy and canon law, whether theological conceptions of the Supernatural and of Revelation, whether it be the attitude of moralists confronted by the great problems of Eugenism and Research;—all without counting that, at a distance of a million years, many historical problems which preoccupy us now so much will have been resolved or will have evaporated a long time ago. On all these points, there is nothing we can say. On the other hand, one thing is certain. If, at that point, Humanity continues (as we suppose) to grow, that is to reflect on itself, it is a proof that the taste for Life will not have stopped rising within it. All of which supposes that, discovering an ever more attractive pole for the convergent efforts of Noogenesis, a more and more ‘christified’ Monotheism *will always be there* (even if all the rest ought to change) to ‘aerate’ the Universe and to ‘amorize’ Evolution”.

# Adventure on the Frontier

*Adrian Martin*

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The onerous though interesting task of presenting a book by Frances Banks<sup>1</sup> to readers of *Theoria to Theory* has come to me partly because I introduced it to the editors. The book was lent to me by a former pupil of the author's, the latter having been for some fifteen years principal of a training college for teachers at Grahamstown in Natal.<sup>2</sup> At that time she was Sister Frances Mary, a member of an Anglican Sisterhood, the Community of the Resurrection.<sup>3</sup> The book caught my interest, because she was saying in 1962 what is heard more often now, that Extra-Sensory Perception and Spiritualism are proper subjects for investigation by those of any religion or none, but especially by those who profess the Christian faith, by whom these subjects of study have long been neglected or condemned out of hand.<sup>4</sup> I found others who thought with me that more should be done and could be initiated quickly in the way of searching investigation into ESP; and that such studies should be regarded as *an* element, if not the basic element, in a serious and scientific approach to the pursuit of prayer and meditation. Those who doubt the propriety of such enquiries should be reminded that "until the nineteenth century it had not become respectable to doubt such phenomena as Precognition, Telepathy and Clairvoyance"<sup>5</sup> and that these subjects are treated at considerable length at various places in the writings of St. Thomas Aquinas.<sup>6</sup>

Some twelve years ago the Churches' Fellowship for Psychical and Spiritual Studies was formed as a step towards rectifying the

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<sup>1</sup> *Frontiers of Revelation*, Max Parrish, London, 1962, 30s., now obtainable from the CFPSS, 5-6 Denison House, Vauxhall Bridge Road, S.W.1.

<sup>2</sup> She took a degree in psychology at Rhodes University, and published a textbook, *Conduct and Ability*, with Methuen in 1936.

<sup>3</sup> An interesting account of the foundation and ideals of the Community can be found in a life of the foundress, *Mother Cecile of South Africa 1883-1906*, compiled by a Sister of the Community. This contains a chapter about the training college, and in this at least Sister Frances Mary probably had a hand. The book was published by SPCK in 1930.

<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, it cannot be too strongly warned that their investigation (especially in the case of Spiritualism) is more for the coolly scientific rather than the eagerly amateurish.

<sup>5</sup> So Fr. Victor White, O.P., in an article in the first number of *Dominican Studies*, Oxford, 1948.

<sup>6</sup> The references in Fr. White's article include twelve on "natural prophecy" in the *Quaestiones Disputatae De Veritate*, and S.T. II, ii qq., 171-4.

complete indifference or hostility of most Christians with regard to these questions. Frances Banks found in this some of the sympathy and encouragement that she needed after her return to civilian life in the world, and also a means of expressing her experiences and the results of some of her studies. But this is to anticipate what should be said of her qualifications for undertaking to lead us on the adventurous journey to the frontiers of revelation.

Negatively her qualifications were strong enough to appeal to the sceptical :

“Unlike some who testify in these pages, I am no psychic, no sensitive, and was moreover brought up in an atmosphere which was definitely inimical to such a development. The third child of an ordinary middle-class family of five, I attracted no special attention. Our chief distinction from our neighbours was my father’s declared agnosticism” (p. 5).

Her early life in an Edwardian household did all that was required to remove any temptation to psychic enquiry, experimentation or “dabbling”. The Victorian agnostic father, who, after years of trying to make “Sunday topper Christianity” work, ended his struggle by returning from church one Sunday and saying, “I’m sorry, Fanny, but I can’t any more”, would surely have been less receptive than most to psychic experience or spiritualistic investigation. This father “. . . had reached this point from an acceptance of the Darwinian theory of evolution which he considered to be, *ipso facto*, antithetical to a Christianity requiring an acceptance of *Genesis* as literal truth” (p. 5).

Negatively again, Frances Banks’ training in an Anglican Sisterhood, while catering well for contemplative and mystical development, would hardly be encouraging to excursions into ESP, still less studies in Spiritualism. These two negative circumstances add authenticity both to her vocation as a Sister and to her later explorations in ESP and Spiritualism.

Positively Frances Banks had qualifications for writing on this subject which are considerable. After her Profession she became a lecturer in her convent’s teacher training school in South Africa. Later she was novice mistress in the community, and later still took a degree in Psychology with the object of improving her understanding of the pupils under her care and those whom they were in turn to teach. Anyone acquainted with the exacting demands of these three fields will realize that, experienced in the one person, they form a unique combination for investigation into a subject as tenuous as para-psychology and on ground so treacherous as

spiritualistic phenomena. Her life as a nun, and particularly as as a trainer of novices, would have given insight into the truly spiritual as distinct from the emotionally spurious. To have been chosen for the work of novice mistress argues a conviction on the part of those qualified to judge that she had the qualities for the post, and these are, spiritually, exacting. The work she did in training embryo women teachers must also have called for at least as rigid a discipline of herself as would be demanded of them. As a trained psychologist her submission to the strictness of scientific method implanted both a facility to suspend judgment on the unverified and a tolerant receptiveness to the apparently unbelievable. (She would no doubt have welcomed and applauded George MacDonald's observation, "Seeing is *not* believing; it's only seeing!")

Until the time she left the Community—which had already given her "study leave" for exploration into ESP—Frances Banks suffered great tensions in relation both to loyalty to the official guardians of the Christian faith and to interior obedience to her community. It was not that she herself felt that there was any disloyalty in a Christian religious investigating these matters (with the proper controls). On the contrary she believed (with St. Anselm) that the fuller the knowledge of all phenomena the greater is the appreciation of the source of all phenomena.

Frances Banks' studies in the psychology of teacher and child training led her to dissatisfaction with methods of teaching children to pray. She writes that once while at prayer :

"I asked that we might be shown a type of training in spiritual realization, such as could be imparted from the earliest years through a sane and gradual application. This after all had been done in other subjects from the sports and skills to the arts and sciences. I undertook if necessary to submit myself to a slow-motion training such as would enable me to analyse the steps, for I felt that the day of such 'blanket' techniques as 'Fold your hands, shut your eyes, and say after me'—all too familiar in our Sunday schools—must come to an end, if our spiritual heritage were to be preserved and stretched to the needs of the coming age" (p. 25).

A more immediate stress was the conflict between her vocation to life as a nun in an Anglican sisterhood (which she lived to the full for twenty-five years) and another vocation to be obeyed, when the time came, either inside or outside the Community—but still to be obeyed. It seems that she had always been possessed by a deep conviction that she had, even after Profession, an additional



and wider field of service than that which her reception into Community life would fulfil. This may have been born of, and was almost certainly fostered by, a suspicion that the life her community offered, full and useful and praiseworthy though it was, could not entirely fulfil any but the more simple personalities "called" to it—and certainly not her own. This suspicion may have been increasingly strengthened by a developing grasp of psychological analysis. On page 15 she writes :

"Sheer goodness, loving-kindness, self-sacrifice, and the fellowship of team-work were abundantly manifested in the warp and woof of daily living. Individual characteristics, which outwardly the life was designed to submerge, tended, nevertheless, to stand out the more starkly because the trappings were shorn off. Some sisters were obviously more deeply immersed in the life of devotion; others stressed a meticulous observance; while others retained a more practical alertness. There was by tradition of the Founder great sincerity and simplicity; very little artificiality of manner or devotion; a great deal of common sense; and, in old age, at least as much humility as there was senility.

"Deeply as I appreciated all this, yet I never found it easy. Somewhere at the back (usually) of my mind there lurked a suspicion that the utter goodness and self-sacrifice of these sisters could reach still further without the inhibitions which their routine, their acknowledged subservience, their mental restrictions, and their physical limitations imposed upon them—all the more by virtue of their sex. Though it may be that I never quite formulated it in that way.

"Looking back, I could wish indeed that in a world of such bewildering new revelation at the transition from one age to another, life-vows could be replaced by the periodic renewal (or otherwise) of religious vows, in some way not too inimical to stability—as indeed obtains in many men's orders. This is no age in which soul can pledge personality to remain static in thought and development (or progressive only along preconceived lines); and the safeguards of sheer habit have only their own costly stultifications and repercussions. Some sisters indeed penetrate a way through to a living Reality and are kept green by living waters; others take refuge in a multiplicity of outer works; but there is always a danger of rendering automatic what should have its springs in spontaneity".

The call to the Community was primary in time, and, at first, in intensity. But even before the seal of Profession was set upon her obedience to the first vocation, the second was already making

itself felt. She joined the Community knowing, or at least having good grounds for expecting, that in it, perhaps through it, she would have the opportunity of fulfilling the second vocation, the vocation to penetrate so far as her own capacities would allow, as far beyond the frontiers of revelation as was given her. Describing her hesitation in choosing how best to fulfil the double vocation on pages 15–16 she says :

“Eventually the old Inner Voice seemed to come clear : (i) Do not join the Roman Catholic Church, for thereby further thought and speculation—and especially for a woman—would be debarred. (ii) Do not join an Anglican Contemplative Order : there you would be debarred from such knowledge as might come from outward contact; and the risks from an unhealthy introversion of life might be very great. (iii) Do not exaggerate the sense of compulsion, either inner or outer; this supposed invisible pressure still leaves you a free agent; no one is coerced, and you are free to go if only as a permissive alternative. (iv) If you stay where you are, you can give a healthy, useful service in the College; and (almost I could hear some such phrase as ‘it is hereby promised you’) the knowledge you seek will come. It will come, so the assurance ran, through the open channels of the College life upon which the progressive thought of the world freely impinges, attracted by the mental vitality within. But I seemed to know that ‘the time was not yet’; that somehow the knowledge was not immediately available in the form required; but that it would come if one could be patient”.

It is not possible—at least for this writer—to distinguish sharply between the book’s material and the personal life and problems of its author. On the one hand, interest in the capabilities of the human personality absorb so much of her interest; on the other the claims of the prior vocation to the Community and its work raised the question of how far the one could be obeyed at the expense of the other. When the matter of how much attention ought to be given to the insistence of the Inner Voice was referred to the Bishop<sup>1</sup> advising her Community, he was quite explicit in saying that :

“A religious had abrogated any subsequent claim to a ‘direct call’ from God—that it was a ‘Protestant’ idea, incompatible with the way of the Church and the Vows of Religion. This explicit statement, I confess, came as a shock—even apart from the practical impasse” (p. 45).

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<sup>1</sup> Presumably the late Bishop Cullen, Bishop of Grahamstown at the time. Ed.

She had herself to work out in her own life the problems of "vocation". Through what media are "messages" from the non-material world brought to us—directly by "inner voices", or through "authorities and powers", e.g. bishops and superiors? The book is an attempt to explore the means at our disposal for answering that question. But that exploration forced her to give more time to these studies than her community, generous and understanding though it was, felt able to allow. It gave her two separate years of "study leave", but in 1947 it became clear that the vocations she had hoped might become merged within her community proved mutually exclusive and she left the convent.

In coming to this decision, a painful one for any religious, she received some comfort from one of her sisters :

"I recalled some farewell words of a kindly sister, quoted from a saint who was purported to have said, 'I never knew peace until I had parted with my own reputation'. Certainly these new derelictions were the burning-ground of many trappings of the lower self, of much that one had taken for granted; of old dogmatic assurances and separatism, of self-righteousness and priggishness".

Once launched on her own in 1948, a projected visit to California, presumably for further study, did not materialize and she took a post as tutor organizer of educational courses in Maidstone Prison. This, which led on to an itinerant study of education and training throughout the English prison system, provided the material for her book *Teach Them to Live*, a study of education in English prisons, published in London in 1958. This book shows that Frances Banks was an able and imaginative administrator who had obviously won the respect of colleagues in the prison service. She also shows considerable insight into the different types of prisoners, some of them very able people, who were members of these educational courses. She found herself the only full-time woman on the personnel staff of this men's prison. Rumours of her former life in a religious order must have percolated since she tells how :

"At the Easter concert, which coincided with my arrival, the ex-public-school pianist who crooned his improvisations sandwiched in the lines : 'The Governor to give us uplift, Has got us a Mother Superior'."

This was her last book before *Frontiers of Revelation*. She was now ready for the last stage of her career (she died in 1966) and thus :

". . . when a letter appeared in a Sunday newspaper over

highly reputable signatures calling for the formation of a Churches' Fellowship for Psychical Study, I sent in my application for membership. Once released from prison work, I found myself swept into a new cycle of activity within this orbit, addressing and meeting people at every stage of enquiry from within the fold of institutional Christianity, and enriched by a host of new contacts. All this resulted in a wealth of interchange of spontaneous psychic and spiritual experience, confirming my growing impression that it is by no means as rare as many might suppose. As ever, however, my own bias inclined me to study of the *inner life* as the safest approach to an understanding of the *afterlife*. Thus I have been drawn on to undertake a probe into both fields of experience by the popular device of a questionnaire. Many who volunteered to complete it heard me speak at CFPSS Groups throughout the country; and usually I have spoken from my own experience of etheric vision and the subtler inner 'double'. It therefore seems fair to give some sketch of the outline of such talks, if only to demonstrate how little the respondents have been directly influenced by them".

The answers to the questionnaire are interesting, and the description of it as a "probe into both spheres" gives the gist of the larger part of the book. The questionnaire itself might be considered by some to be fairly amateur; but what is more important than this is that Frances Banks perceived the problems which need thinking about and stated them in clear and precise terms.

The Churches' Fellowship for Psychical and Spiritual Studies gave her wider contacts and a forum, and this may be, at present, the most that can be given by that lively and stimulating body, whose existence seems to be due in the main to a psychic experience of one of its foundation members. It was the best she could find at the moment. What she held as a vision at one stage of her independent existence, and which may have remained with her until the end, is described on page 50 :

"Throughout this period one implacable objective loomed before my mental vision. It was, in practical effect, a college aspiring to a university standard of scholarship, which should be devoted to spiritual and religious studies. It had been hard to find the place and the means for balanced study of the whole field, avoiding premature commitments to particular cults which could never comprehend the whole. Hence I eagerly drew up a series of blue-prints, outlining such a foundation : its constitution and staffing, its theoretical and practical studies and aims. It

was to deal with historical, psychological, and scientific aspects of the religions of the world; with revelation, inspiration, prayer, and mysticism; with ethics, energies, and the evidences for survival; with magic and miracle; in short with the validities and techniques concerned with both the inner and the afterlife. 'Thus', so I wrote at the time, 'the picture is that of an embryo university for spiritual studies, in its threefold aspect of research, integration of knowledge, and teaching. As such it might well become a prototype of a kind of institution to be found under the aegis of various Local Education Authorities, either singly or in combination'—perhaps, as we should say now, a specialized type of 'County College' ”.

The CFPSS is not that, nor is it meant to be; though it may well give encouragement to those sympathetic to this vision. Meanwhile, the suggestion has been made that our existing monasteries and convents are the natural places for such activities to be inaugurated and pursued. They should be bases to explore the nature of soul; not safe enclaves protected from difficult questions. Had Frances Banks' own community been such, or at least more sympathetic and understanding of her personal leanings and abilities, she might well have remained within it. So, at any rate, the suggestion seems to run, and there are many who would endorse it. But communities too have their problems! One of these is that many of them were founded for specific purposes, and individuals join them primarily because they are in sympathy with those purposes, giving up their own interests and prospects in order to further them. This is part of the sacrifice demanded and gladly given. It is also part of the reason why there is no great competition for places.

We might all agree that communities should—some of them could—provide facilities for such investigations. Whether they are proper places for pioneer work in these fields is a difficult question. It is true that some of their members have some particular qualifications for comparing the spiritual atmospheres of a variety of religious and secular groups, and so perhaps for “trying the spirits” at séances. But it is also very understandable that Sister Frances Mary, while she was still on study leave and the question of her vocation to remain in the Community had not explicitly arisen, should be asked to discard her habit while investigating the practices of the religious underworld of Johannesburg, some of which are no doubt exceedingly odd. That this was done at the request of her Community is clear on page 34, but it might have been done at the request of some of her other friends, who feared lest

she should be taken for a spy on strange religious activities. There are particular difficulties about collective contacts between a Christian religious community and groups engaged in the practice of other religions. Even when these are given hospitality in a religious house, there is a natural tendency for both groups to respect one another's privacy. What is really needed is some kind of association where initiates of more than one religion can meet at a sufficiently deep level without feeling either that they are on foreign and possibly hostile ground, or that the atmosphere has been sterilized into a frozen neutrality.

Frances Banks' own strength is shown less in what she says about scientific accounts of psychic phenomena than in her accounts of some of her own contemplative experiences. She does not simply draw on the language of occult literature, but gives a careful analytic account of what the experience was like. For instance:

“I remember looking up and trying to unite myself with the silent power of the heavens above. Presently I noticed a dim opalescent glow lighting my feet. Wondering whether it could be a last ray of the setting sun, I turned round only to be assured that it had long since withdrawn all light. At the same time there stole over me a mysterious sense of, as it were, entering into another dimension—so difficult to describe, yet so characteristic of such encounters and so convincing. And now from my entire person, through the grey cotton habit I was wearing, there flowed this light I had never seen before—a soft opalescent rose-colour. Round our feet it made a circle, while for perhaps a score of yards ahead it etched the way of the cart-track as it wound up the hill and down dale past the great bosses of palm-trees. We walked in silence, the light bathing us both and issuing in a steady, just sufficient, radiance.

“Once I wondered, as the ground grew more familiar, whether I could walk without it. For a moment it disappeared from sight, and my legs moved automatically along the way; again, I looked more carefully at the track, the automatism left me, and I could not walk a step without stumbling. I stopped and asked for restoration, and once again the flow returned and guided us safely back to the hotel hutments.

“I can only say that no outer light has ever shone for me with such luminous effect as this light from within.

“It seems clear that I am eye-minded rather than ear-minded, and yet during this period I was for much of the time aware of a musical accompaniment, a kind of deep orchestration which

had no earthly basis in other than extra-sensory perception. Indeed, it was all rather as though some higher Power or Being, or even group of Beings, were trying to force me to attend to supersensory aspects for a purpose but dimly apprehended”.

Some of her experiences developed within the setting of a deliberately undertaken discipline of meditation.

“This daily persistence laid some solid foundations. Visualization and the keeping of a spiritual diary were early features. Some of the symbols had the freshness of novelty. I remember, for instance, beginning with the symbol of a Lotus, which had to be manipulated mentally in various ways. I began with the mental sketch of a pencilled outline, static and constricted. But, as time went on, movement and colours followed; buds burst open, wheels revolved, and flames flickered upward. With all of which came an inner change to greater freedom, expansion and awareness.

“One came at some point to be able to rise to a golden region of the Soul and the Light of the Christ Presence. While later on, a bridge of light, love and power seemed to take one to further regions of the Spirit, setting up a two-way traffic. It was in a way a slow process, with dull spells; yet there were also times of special insight, shared moreover in a group relationship, with souls known and unknown”.

In conclusion, here is her account of the kind of thinking she saw was needed :

“In all directions, thinkers and experimentalists are today seeking after and positioning some such explanation of a universal medium, omnipresent and conductile. Physical and mental scientists have indeed coined a host of words in which to postulate it at varying levels. Our forefathers spoke of the ‘anima mundi’, the elixir of life, the philosopher’s stone, and the Holy Grail. Today we may choose from such terms as : the biosphere; the psychic ether, the objective psyche, and an ether of images; the collective unconscious, the paraconscious and the ‘spider mind’; the group mind, the group matrix and the transpersonal network; the field of force, the noosphere and the universal mind; and on to the Over Self, Higher Self, and the Omega; All these phrases point to a single meaning; that nothing exists in separation, that truly in ONE ‘we live and move and have our being’. There is virtue neither in negativity nor in obscurantism; and every new understanding but reveals fresh fields for further comprehension and exploration. There may be some value in doing

the right thing for the wrong reason, or the wrong thing for the right reason; but neither will match the validity of the right thing for the right reason. And there may well be other, as yet not fully tried paths (by which I certainly do not allude to drug-inducement!) to the holiness which is wholeness, paths better suited to the modern mind which has been reared on science. It may well be necessary to make a constructive search for new symbols, or the new adaptation of old symbols, to bridge the gulf between matter and spirit as it is apprehended today. And in no field is this more necessary than in the so-called (and perhaps unfortunately so-called) mystic life, as well as in the practice of 'ordinary' prayers".



# The Church of Scientology

*Michael Lamb*

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The recent journalistic emphasis on the absurdities of Scientology has tended to obscure the fact that it is a sociological phenomenon of considerable interest. It is after all rather singular in the late 60's for a Church of any description to be gaining souls instead of losing them. And the Church of Scientology, we are told, is going from strength to strength in this respect. Admittedly they got three or four million pounds' worth of free publicity, as they put it, thanks to the efforts of the Minister of Health to subdue them, but on the other hand it could be maintained that in view of the unfavourable nature of most of this publicity it is all the more surprising that Mr. Robinson's travail should have fallen on his own pate. Perhaps this appeal is simply symptomatic of the frustration of the religious instinct in our present society. There does seem to be good evidence that many people who are disillusioned or perhaps simply bored with orthodox religions feel themselves to be in a spiritual vacuum, and seek solace in the first new cult that comes to their attention.

Now for all the proliferation of cults in the fertile soil of twentieth century materialism, there can be little doubt that the combined efforts of Mr. Robinson and the Press ensured that Scientology was the first one to come to the attention of a large number of people in this condition. Furthermore, it has since its early days acquired considerable accretions of occultism, various aspects of which Jung and others correctly prophesied would fire the imagination of increasing numbers of people, and these cannot have failed to enhance its appeal. But perhaps the most important factor is that most of its principles and practices are solidly twentieth century, and backed up with a literature couched in language which though highly idiosyncratic is strongly reminiscent of the jargon of science and psychology.

From its inception Scientology has been hailed as the religion for the technological age. In fact, if a current anecdote about its genesis is to be believed, it was actually conceived as such, in a way that must surely be unique in the history of religion. According to this anecdote it was the result of a discussion between a group of Science Fiction writers about the form a popular religion might take in the technological age. This discussion probably started in a lighthearted vein, but its effect on L. Ron Hubbard, the founder of Scientology, who was one of the writers concerned, appears to

have been quite galvanizing. At that time Science Fiction writers were still very much concerned with problems of technology and engineering, especially with cybernetics, and the question of whether machines could think or brains be regarded as computers. Hubbard was typical in approaching problems of human behaviour and efficiency from an engineering point of view, and therefore found an enthusiastic audience for his ideas when in the summer of 1950 a magazine called *Astounding Science Fiction* published his account of the development of his theory of the mind, which he called "Dianetics". J. W. Campbell, jun., the editor of this magazine, was likewise a devotee of this approach, and wrote a "rave" editorial about Hubbard's article in the same issue. It is worth quoting from this :

"The long article on Dianetics by L. Ron Hubbard in this issue, is, I feel, a highly important publication indeed. The article describes a technique of mental therapy of such power that it will, I know, seem fantastic. If so, it can only be said that the power of the human mind is, indeed, fantastic. I want to assure every reader, most positively and unequivocally, that this article is not a hoax, joke, or anything but a clear statement of a totally new scientific thesis".

It is interesting to note that he emphasizes the therapeutic aspect of Dianetics, and indeed rather extravagant claims are made for its therapeutic effectiveness in an advertisement in a later issue of ASF. It would appear that Scientology's subsequent disclaimers of this and refusal to admit mentally ill people to the movement represent a departure from this earlier attitude. At this time, however, these claims were entirely consistent with the engineering approach. Hubbard says in this first article, "My right to enter this field was an enquiring brain which had been trained in mathematics and engineering and which had a memory bank full of questions and far-flung observations. It was the basic contention that the human mind was a problem in engineering and that all knowledge would surrender to an engineering approach", and later, "Dianetics is an engineering science, built heuristically on axioms".

However, a whole catechism of metaphysical dogma has since grown up around this comparatively tough-minded nucleus. It is interesting to consider how this development took place. The original *Astounding Science Fiction* articles seem to represent the first of three phases. They deal briskly with Freudian theory, most of it unacknowledged, though Freud is given an occasional pat on the back for having had one or two ideas on the right lines. We are informed that the minds of Hubbard's co-experimenters

had been "bucked" back through their early traumas, some of which turned out to be pre-natal. In fact, we are solemnly told that "pre-natal engrams are recorded as early as twenty-four hours after conception", and, of this bold statement, that "the objective reality has been checked so far as time and limited means permitted".

The keynote for future developments is then hinted at, in the same journal, when we are told that Hubbard is currently investigating ESP and Yoga. It is possible to gather from the pamphlets which begin to proliferate now that some adepts have been "bucked" back through several re-births, and into "out-of-the-body experiences" and astral travel. However, in Scientology, the doctrine of reincarnation is divorced from its usual connotation of moral responsibility and karmic development, and awareness of previous lives seems merely to be regarded as a means of tapping the reservoir of useful information which a man may be supposed to have collected in the course of them. Subtle metaphysical doctrines thus reinforce a body of attitudes which are largely those of the success-conscious Western world.

In the third phase, it becomes clear that all these techniques are now fused together in a planned course to develop mental efficiency with a view to achieving greater material success. Perhaps it would not be too cynical to observe that an American attempt to evolve a new religion for the twentieth century might have been expected to develop along these lines, in view of the widespread acceptance of the Johnsonian dictum that a man is seldom so innocently employed as when making money.

It now emerges that Scientology operates on several levels. The higher echelons are called "Operating Thetans". Their mode of life is somewhat obscure, but one phrase used of them is "self-determined certainty". In "Scientology and the Bible", where quotations from the works of L.R.H. are put in parallel columns with verses from the Scriptures, Psalm 91 v. i, "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty" is paired with "The self-determined certainty carries one into the higher echelons".

At the next level in the hierarchy are the "clears", who are said to have achieved an efficient stage of self-awareness, but whose "thetans" are not yet "operating", and at the lower levels there are successive stages by which "pre-clears" become "clear" through a process known as "auditing". "Auditing" was the original dianetic term for the sessions designed to remove the blockages called "norns" and "engrams". But these techniques

have by now left the high-spirited experimental stage and are clearly aimed at stepping up aggression and drives to power. There is more of Adler than Freud here, in some ways, though with little understanding of Adler's compassion. Very likely all this does lead to an increased sense of adequacy. Indeed, even the methods of thinking up counter-accusations against people known to be antagonistic to the movement may have a therapeutic effect at a certain stage of development. If you are attacked, the ability to stand up and hit back may be healthier than lying down and sulking. (Perhaps some of the higher echelons would even maintain that this is a necessary preliminary to learning to turn the other cheek.) At the time, when the Ministry of Health refused student visas to Scientologists, the Press published reports of complaints by East Grinstead residents concerning the recommended method of treatment under the Scientologists' ethical code for anybody who was designated "fair game". If these complaints were right anyone could be legitimately counter-attacked by hitting back, including digging up and publishing damaging facts about the past life of the attacker. This has produced a double reaction in public opinion: first an insistence that such methods should not be used in our society; secondly a hypocritical reluctance to confess that at present they are used. Thus the serious question, if the accounts are correct, becomes: why are such methods of verbal counter-attack so frequently and successfully used in modern democracies? What more primaevial methods are they a substitute for, and what, if any is their long run value?

The recent International Congress of Scientology at Croydon, has been widely reported in the national Press. Julian Wells who went as a visitor has sent us his account of his impressions.

"To a non-Scientologist, arriving with little knowledge of Scientology and an open mind, the whole experience was rather confusing. On entering the reception area of the Fairfield Hall the first thing I noticed was the overall appearance of 'smoothness' of the delegates, all labelled with their names, many also with their posts in the movement, which were mostly incomprehensible to the uninitiated. Many delegates, men and women in roughly even proportion (women in the majority if anything) struck me not so much by their neatness and grooming as by the 'trendiness' of their dress. I must modify that by saying that it was that very conventional 'trendiness' one might associate with sophisticated night life, rather than hippiedom or pop culture. It came to me that this was *par excellence* the American middle class—successful and youthful businessmen. Of course they weren't all quite like that. There

were many who looked very ordinary; I did spot three or four pairs of jeans and one pair of 'Lennon spectacles', one dog collar, and several negro faces, but oddly enough I noticed no Asians. Having bought my ticket for 10s. and given my name and address, I made my first verbal contact as I tried, labelless, to make my way to the concert hall, the place where things happened. 'Hi!' said an American wearing a shiny, well-cut suit and an acquired charm, as he took me gently by the arm and enquired if he could help me. So I showed him my ticket and asked him to confirm that many Americans had flown over for the Congress, which he did. I went to Reception and the 'Hi!', this time from the English woman at the desk, was slightly less congruous and less spontaneous, and it emerged that this salutation was almost universally used as the opening gambit. Is this out of a pamphlet on social occasions? Anyway it was essentially Hubbardish. Here also I had to give my name and address, which over the three days they took regularly.

"I went to the concert hall where the opening ceremony was due to start and 'freaky' futuristic music played. The lights went down, the backcloth-cum-screen was lit up in orange and red, the bronze bust of 'our Ron' illuminated, and two lines of girls carrying national flags marched to the music of Bobby Richards, the Scientologist film music composer. They did a few manoeuvres on the stage reminiscent of drum majorettes, and then took their places beside the stage. The women had made their first appearance and as the congress continued I got the impression that women played a very important part in the organization. This was confirmed when the compère at the end introduced the congress organizers and the other top officials, who were mostly women. The congress ended with the same sort of emotion and ceremony that it began with, as well as several standing ovations. The content (which was reasonably well covered in the Press) confirmed the impression I gained by participation in the ineffectual seminars and other conversations with Scientologists, of muddled thought, poorly expressed and ill-ordered, and uncritical faith in the doctrine and technology. The material was mostly chatty lectures full of anecdotes, two of them delivered by the St. Paul of the movement, John McMaster. I should mention also the technically bad film *A Student at the Advanced Org*, dealing uninformatively with the studies and life of a young American woman undergoing OT (Operating Thetan) processing on Hubbard's ship, *The Royal Scotsman*, moored on the Spanish Mediterranean coast. That evening there was a ball, but I was unfortunately unable to attend, not feeling at home in the 'tuxedo' required for the occasion.

“I went away with the impression of a collection of happy, self-confident and sincere people, who seemed to be getting something out of it all; nice people too (in case my criticism of what was said and done is transferred to the personalities concerned)”.

It looks at any rate as though for many people Scientology is rather fun. Some of the gimmickry is redolent of Stephen Potter and Erich Berne, in spite of their alleged mission to rescue their pre-clears from “game” conditions.

In short, Scientologists do not, so far as we can see, justify their claims to uncover fantastic powers of mind, but they do not seem to represent a public menace. If some of their activities in fact constitute offences against the common law, they should be dealt with by that law. Unpopularity of methods does not justify a witch-hunt, still less attempts to suppress a movement by administrative action. In any case, it looks very much as if the specifically repressive measures taken against Scientology have so far been the opposite of effective, and indeed the latest news is that they are no longer being enforced. This is no doubt a victory for the forces of democracy, but the moral of it for the Minister of Health is not far to seek. Two years ago Scientology was comparatively obscure, and its conference at Oxford was not even reported in the local press. Reporters were dispatched to cover it but did not consider it worth mentioning. Now, according to *The Times*, a spokesman for the movement prophesies a membership of one million by the end of the year, which is half the number of practising members of the Church of England, and its press coverage rivals that of the more dramatic vagaries of the Roman Catholic Church. If it goes on under its present impetus, this iconoclastic age may yet see the “religious resurgence” hinted at earlier in this article take an unexpected course and Mr. Robinson will no doubt figure prominently in the hagiology of the Church of Scientology.

# Religion and the Social Anthropology of Religion

*Dorothy Emmet*

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My faith can largely be put anthropologically but not quite. I want to try to say what this "not quite", which may be the most important part, consists in, and then to ask what difference it may make to an anthropological interpretation when you make it seriously believing that there is an internal and personal as well as external and social side of religion, and that the internal and personal side calls not only for psychological concepts but also for a metaphysical concept.

It is often said that believing that a religion expresses more than social values and relationships in symbolic form need not affect its sociological analysis. Contemporary anthropologists are indeed more often prepared than those of the recent past to allow that people in their religion can be concerned with questions which are not reducible to social ones. But having allowed this, they mostly do not then ask whether the non-social religious concerns may make a difference to the social ones, but proceed as if an analysis in terms of social relationships could still be made without having to take these other matters into account. Evans-Pritchard is a notable exception in his book *Nuer Religion*; he takes the theology of the Nuer extremely seriously. I am, however, not here concerned with how one can expound people's theology, but rather with asking whether, if you are looking at myths and the ritual associated with them as expressive of beliefs and attitudes which are not only concerned with social relations, this will cause you to ask some questions in your analysis of those very social relations which might not be asked otherwise. This does not, of course, mean that you are not also interested in seeing how social relations also affect the beliefs and attitudes. But if you see these beliefs as simply "overbeliefs" and the attitudes as really expressive of the bonds, the tensions, the conflicts, the reconciliations, the morale of people in their relations with one another, you will be in danger of turning the limitations of a particular methodology into an ideology. Moreover your attitude towards the ritual of another people will be rather like that of an agnostic professor attending a colleague's funeral. You see that there is a case for having some formal means of expressing sentiments

appropriate to the occasion, but would have your tongue in your cheek about the peculiar nature of the symbols used to express these. Indeed, as an anthropological observer, you might go further and say that, though the participants didn't realize it, the symbols could in fact be interpreted in terms of the stresses and resolution of stresses in their own relationships, and, as the occasion is that of a funeral, by the necessity to make a new adjustment in their social life by coming to terms with the fact of the death. Their departed relative may now be thought of as related to them in the way that the invisible ancestors are, and that itself is a change of relationship to which adjustment must be made.

But if one says that this is all that the symbols connected with the ritual are really about, their use then becomes a confidence trick. If the participants come to see that this is all they are saying and doing, would they be able to go on doing it? So the purely sociological interpretation leaves a dilemma. The sociologist holds that myths and rituals have a necessary place in enabling people to live together in social groups, facing crises and conflicts, and yet this interpretation, if it were the whole of the story, would erode the myths and rituals. It also gives a view of these which is both sceptical and conservative; that is to say, it does not allow for thoughts through which they could be remade or new ones created. They become a reflection of social relationships, and so one can only suppose that they may change with these, no doubt after considerable time-lag in the case of changing societies like our own, where their forms may continue as survivals of a now largely obsolescent pattern in society.

All this, however, does not bring in the personal struggle, vision, beliefs, of those to whom these things are connected with an inner way of living. An anthropologist who himself is trying to follow some such inner way can approach these myths and practices as a "fellow-believer", not, of course, in the sense that he accepts the same beliefs and forms of expression, but as holding that these people are justified in meaning what they say when they speak of themselves as not only concerned with their relationships to one another. If he holds this, there are three assumptions made in most contemporary anthropological writing on these matters which he would challenge.

First, there is the use of the word "mystical" to mean non-empirical kinds of causation, or super-sensible qualities which are attributed to things but which, it is said, they do not really possess. Secondly, there is the use of the word "supernatural" to characterize purported objects of belief, which in fact can be interpreted as



symbols of forces within the psyche connected with social relations, including relations with the imagined spirits of the ancestors. Thirdly, there is the assumption that, whatever one's personal views on these things, one is scientifically committed to drawing a hard and fast line between the empirical and the mystical, and only talking about the empirical where one can make straightforward observations. But if you believe that mythical and ritual interests are forms of religious interest, and that a religious interest is not only the symbolic form of a social one, but is also, when it is serious, a personal concern in aspiration, exploration, faith, these assumptions will have to be reconsidered. Myths and practices will then need to be seen in a cosmic and not only a social setting. It isn't easy to justify this in particular cases, since they often look like ways of trying to domesticate the cosmos by personalizing and symbolizing it as an extended family of which our own society forms a part, with its unseen complements in the heavenly world, right up to God the Father. So the myths may be said to be ways of trying to be cosy about the cosmos through being social about it instead of being unc cosy about our society through being cosmic about it. And this propensity to domesticate the cosmos is only too deep-seated. Part of the reason why we have to struggle against excessive personalist language in religion is that this language can simply fixate us in this tendency. The importance of Teilhard de Chardin as a religious thinker is that he is one of the few people who successfully struggles against this. You feel that he really does succeed in living with religious imagination in terms of the vastness of the world in space and time, and sees human life as part of a cosmic evolutionary process. He does not just give intellectual assent to this without it seriously affecting his personal religious way of thinking and speaking, as I suppose most of us do. He really does see this wider cosmic vision as something to be assimilated religiously. And whatever may be right or wrong in his particular views on evolution, this is itself an achievement.

So I approach myths and rituals not only with the assumption that they are ways of making the cosmos part of our society, including in this the distinguishing of other social groups inimicable to our own. A great deal of the symbolism may of course do just this. But I approach it with the question of whether some of it, at least to some people, may be an attempt to express something more universal.

At this point let me put my cards on the table and say that I find I need a "power" concept which cuts across the rigid distinction of the empirical and mystical and so may be, if you like, a frankly metaphysical notion. I believe that when people under

certain conditions seek visions and sometimes claim them (as described in the review of *Two Leggings* in the last *T. to T.* and in the discussion that follows in this number) they are not only boosting their own morale. I know practically nothing about mystical experiences, but I think that an ingredient in some of them, at any rate, is an experience of entering in quietness into a state of self-abandonment out of which comes an enhancement of spontaneous creative energy and a power of self-giving. The question here, of course, is whether this is simply describing conditions within which a certain psychological state can occur. Even if it is, and if it is found that religious practices can help one to get into it, this would be worth knowing. But there might then be the same danger of a confidence trick as I suggested in the case of the purely sociological interpretation of a religious ritual. If we see the practices as techniques to achieve a desired state of mind, can we then go on using them as means of giving ourselves rather than of achieving something for ourselves? Perhaps so; but the point is that non-self-seeking dedication seems to be a necessary ingredient in the state of mind.

I want to say that at the deepest level of the psyche, what some of the old people called its "*fundus*", the experience seems like a unity of our own life with power not just self-produced. People have talked about a "wider self", William James' term, and I think that there are four distinguishable possibilities here. (There may be more but let us take these four.) One is William James' notion of the continuity of the conscious self with a wider unconscious self, out of which can come an access of creative energy under suitable conditions. Another is the Jungian notion that at this level we can be related to other people in a collective unconscious out of which certain psychic energies expressing themselves in archetypal symbols arise. A third would be the view favoured by sociologists of Durkheim's school, that what we are then aware of is the supporting, sustaining power of society around us, on which we depend, and whose authority we accept. The fourth is that at this point, or in this state, we bring our own lives into alignment with the working of a more universal creative power (called in some of its workings in theological language "grace"). Empirically, of course, the first seems the simplest hypothesis, but the trouble here is that, at least in its Freudian form, the unconscious is not a source of creative energy but of separate restless impulses which we have to direct and use as best we can. The Freudian notion of sex in fact fragments into these relentless impulses. The sociological notion of the power of society does not account for the fact that the kind

of experience described can come to people when they are at variance with their society or needing to withdraw from it to find their own souls, which is not the same as bringing themselves back into social submission. In any case it is difficult to see how one can make society (even with a capital S) into a god. Chesterton once remarked on how the social positivists who talk like this could not swallow the notion of three persons in one God but had no difficulty in swallowing 90,000,000 persons in one God. The Jungian notion seems to me a halfway house. We may well be linked with each other in ways which are beneath the level of consciousness (see Joan Miller's article in *T. to T.*, 1, i). But this does not necessarily mean that the Jungian account of co-consciousness and its archetypes will do, and in any case this still makes the experience a social, psychological one, though in a very wide sense of "social".

So I come to the notion of the unity of the springs of one's own life at this point with trans-social power. This may be a metaphysical notion, but not in a way which puts it completely outside the relevance of any empirical study. We can look as William James did, only even more closely, at the conditions, manifestations and fruits of this kind of experience. And if we want any considerations as to why this power is not only our own psychic power supported by thoughts of society round about us, I suggest we should look at what seems to me a crucial distinction. This is the distinction which I have suggested already between looking on enhanced powers of the psyche as something which we seek techniques to achieve for our own purposes, or by rituals as social techniques for social purposes, and the notion that in the end we are the servants and not the users of this power. This is a crucial distinction of orientation which gets put in religious language by invoking the notion of the "will of God". This is a far more difficult notion than is generally realized, since it expresses a relation of our will to something other than our will which cannot be adequately described on the analogy of the ways in which one person is said to do the will of another person. These ways are put in variations of a command/obedience relationship which only makes sense when there is a much more explicit signalling system by which the commander issues instructions than I can believe obtains in this case. Moreover, there is the crucial question of decision and responsibility. When we make decisions in this state of mind, we have to use our judgement and take responsibility for it, while nevertheless giving the primacy not to what we want to do for our own purposes, or even what we decide collectively we should do for a common social purpose. Moreover, such an action is very

much our own action. So if we speak here of a "union of wills" this is less like co-operation with someone else for a common purpose than it is like coming into unity with a power at the *fundus* of our own being. In religious language there are sayings about becoming "one will" with God, and this does not hold in our relations of co-operation with other people, though it is possible that we may get near to it in cases of close telepathic rapport (which need to be taken seriously, and we need to know more about them).

I have said that I am prepared to believe that this is not just the union of our conscious with our unconscious mind, but the rising up in us of a spontaneous creativity, achieved in a state of receptivity and self-abandonment. It may well be that to think of this as the realization in us of a universal creative power which finds its expression in innumerable different ways throughout nature whenever things achieve appropriate conditions of order and relationship, is an over-belief. It is certainly a matter of faith. What, however, is not only over-belief or arbitrary faith, but a matter which can be looked into empirically, is the difference which may be made if this enhanced creative power is sought for one's own purposes or if it comes through letting go, self-giving, perhaps in an implicit "*fiat voluntas tua*". The conclusions we might reach in exploring this difference could bear on the plausibility or otherwise of the over-belief. In the former case the enhancement of powers might be what the Germans call "daemonic", that is to say a person seeks divine powers to promote his own ambitions and get control over other people, and may well be effective in this. For each of us goes through life with a strongly self-centred, possessive will to live, and, since this is threatened by all sorts of insecurities, we may well try to strengthen it by using techniques to enhance its power. Religions, on the other hand, sometimes at any rate and in some of their forms, are concerned with turning the energies of this will to live into a will to love. Sometimes they may seem to be trying to subjugate the will to live through a death-wish, but this may be one of the many ways in which a little-understood and dangerous process can go wrong. The process has to do with the change of orientation which is described in variations on the theme of "dying to live", and this may be one of the motifs in the very complex, but almost universal religious practice of sacrifice.

Possibly the distinction between magic and religion should be seen, as Frazer in a way did, as involving the question as to whether there is an attempt to use divine powers for one's own purposes, good or evil, or to give oneself to be used by them. This is separated from the question as to whether the particular techniques called

magical are likely to be effective for the purposes they are used for. Since so-called primitives have often retained capacities in psychic powers which we have largely lost, some of these techniques may be effective, though not for the reasons thought.

Devotion and dedication need not, of course, logically imply that one is devoted to something *universal*. There can be extreme dedication to extremely partial causes. But where there is a motive at work that liberates from self-interest, there is the possibility that it may liberate us still further, and lead us beyond a group interest as a final concern. This possibility could affect the way in which we see "tribal religions". A religion may, as sociologists say, be a way in which the loyalties, tensions, conflicts in human relations, get symbolically expressed and temporary resolutions achieved, both in individual and group life. No doubt this is a large part of the story. But if it is the whole of the story, then the motive underlying it will be to maintain the group or the self against threats to its life. It is this, rather than its tenets, which make a religion tribal, and most of our Western Anglo-American religion is highly tribal in this sense. Tenets and practices are, of course, coloured everywhere by cultural limitations. This is not in itself what makes them tribal, but they are tribal in so far as they make the life and interests of a particular group the central concern. Against this, the notion of the "will of God" brings in an orientation in which our own strength and survival and that of our group is not the final concern. "The will of God" is a joker notion, not in the sense in which you can make it mean any purpose you like (though no doubt it is all too possible to use it just like this), but in the sense that it cannot be identified with any particular purpose, and it reminds us that any particular purpose we have may need to be called in question. This does not mean that "the will of God" is a negative abnegation. "I want health and beauty not the will of God" said a girl who was told she ought not to pray for health but that the will of God be done. She had her case, for surely health and beauty are among the fruits of creative power. But they may not come, and there is then need for a way of freeing oneself from frustration and resentment in having to do without them.

If we approach the social anthropology of a people's religion knowing how difficult and yet crucial it is in our own case to make the distinction between using a religion for our purposes and following its leads, we can be sensitive as to whether others in these other religions are not trying to make the same distinction within their own conditions. It is a distinction which I connect with the

notion of *vocation* as distinct from *function*. The seeking of vocation may simply be the finding of a social function within which one can be accepted and successful. This is the meaning of the word as generally understood in the various vocational guidance agencies in our own society, and their counterparts in some of the techniques of seeking one's "vision spirit" in other societies, as described in the book *Two Leggings* which Thomas Merton reviewed in the last number. But the notion may be very much more, and indeed, in some of these methods of "seeking the spirits" so described, it surely can be more. It can be a way of finding one's way of living and working from these deeper springs of action so as to be released to give one's gift rather than to achieve one's ambition. An instance of vocation in this sense through religious reorientation is given by Verrier Elwin in his description of the girl shamans (whom he calls shamanins) among the hill people of Orissa. (Elwin was an anthropologist who understood vocational religious claims from inside.) The girls who believe they are about to become shamanins frequently go through times of illness and hysteria, until they can accept their destiny, part of which is a "spiritual marriage" with a tutelary spirit. He writes: "The 'marriage' of the shamanin, then, is akin to conversion in that it is one of the phenomena of adolescence; it frees a girl from dependence on her mother; it makes her religion central to her life and subjects her to strong moral imperatives. The experience is often marked by resistance and conflict and consequent illness which, however, disappears on confession and surrender. On the other hand, ideas about delivery from sin and the transformation of disbelief to faith are absent. The shamanin's conversion is rather an organization of psychic energy around a new interest. It marks the transition from dissociation to unity and thus from mediocrity to significance. The girls who have given themselves to this arduous and sometimes dangerous adventure are unusually self-possessed and dignified. They have an air of authority. Their actions are marked by what I can only call charity; they are interested in people, for they have the power to allay and cure their ills. And these virtues do not pass with time. The older shamanins retain much of the devotion and enthusiasm of their younger years". (*The Religion of an Indian Tribe*, p. 163.)

The power concept I have invoked will also bear on how one sees the relation between morals and religion. I do not believe that this power is just a moral power, however much our Hebrew-Christian tradition may have encouraged us to think so. Morals, I believe, grow out of how people see the requisites of ways of living

together in communities, and can be developed through rational reflection on these ways. Where the concept of the universal will or power of God could make a difference would be in leading people to be morally creative, venturing beyond the established *mores*, rather than by itself laying down codes on Sinai, or in “natural law”, or anywhere else. Prophetic religion has this note of further venture about it. It does not only bolster up the established *mores*, or even the *mores* of dissident sub-groups within the society. It expresses a more personal aspiration towards a more universal attitude to one’s fellow men apart from their particular groupings. Thus the individual person who lives most closely in this spirit may well find himself in conflict with the *mores* of society, not only of the established society but of its dissident groups. This concern would therefore make one look for signs of moral creativity and universalism within the societies one would be studying, and not only to trace out the stereotypes in its moral ideas and practices.

These are some of the ways in which I believe one’s own views and beliefs about religion could affect the way one would approach its social anthropology. They would make one ask other questions besides those like “What kind of people with what kind of social status would be likely to be Methodists?”, or, more interestingly, “What kinds of social conflicts and the attempt to resolve them underlie this particular piece of religious myth and ritual?”. Believing that a religious concern is not primarily a social concern in disguise, one would try to see how people’s religious interests made a difference to their social beliefs and practices, and not only try to see it the other way round. This is not to say that there is no case for trying to see it the other way round as well. Our relations with one another in social groups affect our lives so vitally that one would expect them to be a considerable part and parcel of any religion. But one would remember that there is also the inner side as well as the outer, and that this inner side has to do with the achievement of a personal, in one sense vocational, way of living, which depends on the direction of inner springs of action within the individual, and not only on social relationships. I suspect that an anthropologist strongly aware of this would approach the people whose religion he was studying as his fellow-experimenters or seekers in this infinitely difficult task, and this in itself would put him into a religious and not only a professional relationship to them. This might make his task more complicated, but it would be a result of fully realizing that he is dealing with people with their own faith, aspirations, struggles, and not only observing how they interacted in social roles. I believe that the best of our

anthropologists are very well aware that they are confronted with human beings with their own life and convictions, but the limitations which they set on the questions they ask and consequently the kind of answers they get, and sometimes also the idea they set up of what constitutes scientific objectivity, prevent this fundamental kind of respect from coming out in their work. There is no easy solution here. An analysis of a religion in social categories can miss its inner concerns. A sympathy with these concerns can make us underestimate how much social interests of various kinds are shaping the religion. In the next article I shall be looking at two outstanding ways in which this latter interest has been interpreted. First, I shall look in more detail than I have been able to do in cursory references in this article, at how social anthropologists who broadly follow Durkheim's assumptions try to interpret a religion as a way of symbolizing forces within the society. This approach as practised nowadays by its sophisticated followers is far more subtle than a method of just showing religion as bolstering up the *status quo*, the view popularly associated with it. The other view, a recent and exciting one, is Lévi-Strauss's conception of myth as a language in which the order of society and the conflicts within it are given a particular dialectical form of expression. Having said that my own faith is "anthropological but not quite", and having tried to say what I mean by "not quite", I shall next go on to look at the anthropological side, and say why, in spite of these qualifications, I think it is a large part of the picture. Having looked at what kinds of religion can be seen as social phenomena, I shall then ask what kinds of societies can be seen as religious phenomena.



# Survival à la Carte

*Euell Gibbons*

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Why did we go to Maine and live for five days on nothing but the wild food we could garner from the sea, shore and adjacent countryside? It all started several years ago, when I was doing research on my first wild-food book, *Stalking the Wild Asparagus*. My neighbour's three children, Gretchen, Mark and David followed me about as I gathered and prepared dozens of edible wild plants, and were always ready to sample the finished products. By the time the book was published they knew practically as much as I did about living off the country.

Then I moved away, but last spring I received a letter from Gretchen which read :

Dear Euell :

How are you? We have been eating barbarea greens since the first of March, and now the wild watercress at the spring is about ready to pick. We had dandelion greens twice and they were sure good. Yesterday we found enough wild asparagus by the hedge so we could have all we wanted with some to give to the Walshes. The wild leeks in the woods are very good. We had them twice, once boiled and once creamed. I like them better fried, but Mama says they stink up the house. The burdock is just showing its leaves, and we dug some of the root and cooked it, but didn't like it very much. (This was *Arctium lappa*, not *Arctium minor*.)

We caught a big snapping turtle from the pond and made soup out of it, and I caught a big bass but had to let him go because it wasn't bass season. Our cat had five kittens, one gray, one tiger, two black and white and one white with black spots. We would like for you to come to see us and go foraging with us again.

Love,

Gretchen.

Wasn't that a delightful letter! I really got a bang out of that parenthesized bit about the Latin names of Burdock. On an impulse I invited the three children to come and stay a week with me. Gretchen was now eleven, while Mark and David, who were very unlike, fraternal twins, were nine. For that week I became

ten years old, and we roamed the lush, Pennsylvania countryside, picking gallons of wild strawberries, wild black raspberries, cattail bloom spikes, wild watercress, day lily buds and other wild comestibles. Along nearby streams we caught dozens of fish and captured bullfrogs and turtles. We carried all these natural delicacies home and prepared sumptuous meals from them which were consumed with great gusto. It was here that the idea of going to the Maine Coast, and living for one week entirely on the food we could forage from the wild, was born, and it grew so rapidly that before the summer was over it had matured.

Unfortunately, David had become involved in other plans and couldn't go along, but Gretchen and Mark were wild with excitement at the prospect. Before leaving, their mother lectured them on how they should behave. She is a frugal soul, and, since we would be eating in restaurants on the way to and from Maine, she told them to always look at the prices on the menus and avoid ordering the more expensive items. Mark took this admonition so seriously that it was almost impossible to get him to order any but the cheapest meals listed.

We carried some food with us, but such food as never before was taken on a camping trip. There was a bag of dried day lily buds, which make a very palatable vegetable when boiled, a jar of dried elderberry flowers, for tea, and a quart of maple syrup I had boiled from the sap of Norway and silver maples the preceding spring. The only purchased items were a small bottle of cooking oil and a box of salt. We also carried several jars of wild-fruit jams and jellies but not for eating; these were distributed as gifts to those who befriended us along the way.

We started collecting wild food before we even reached Maine. A mountain spring in Massachusetts was choked with wild watercress, so we bagged a good supply and stored it in our camp icebox. In Vermont we found a great bed of wild mint, and mint tea became the favourite beverage of the whole expedition. In New Hampshire we picked a gallon of black, ripe choke-cherries, so free of astringency they could be eaten raw.

For some time I had been carrying on a correspondence about wild foods with a Lieutenant Brake, who is in charge of the Naval Survival School in Brunswick, Maine, so when we reached Brunswick I called him and invited him to share our last civilized meal. He and his pretty wife came, and we were a very congenial party. I told the children that the sky was the limit and that they could order absolutely anything they wanted. This set up a serious conflict in Mark, and he scanned the menu with obvious anxiety.

Finally he heaved a gusty sigh and said, "If it's alright with you, I'd like a large order of fried clams".

Early next morning we rolled into the Naval Air Station and the Survival School rolled out the red carpet for us. I became almost reconciled to paying income taxes! A quick check on the tides showed that low water was due in a few minutes, and if we were to gather any littoral life for lunch we had better be about it. We were shown to the beach adjacent to the school's survival area. By this time we had accumulated quite a following, for besides Lieutenant Brake there were several instructors from the school and a pretty WAVE photographer in our train. However, we lost our following at the edge of the clam flat for here the mud was over shoe tops. The children and I slogged out on the seemingly endless mud flat to where the clam holes were large and thick. Each forkful of stiff mud yielded half-a-dozen or more keepable clams, and our kettle soon filled. At a tidal stream we laid in a supply of blue mussels, and beyond the stream we found razor clams. As we were navigating the sticky mud back to the shore Mark said, "I didn't know that a survival trip would be like this". I tried to console him by pointing out that firm ground was only a hundred yards away, but he answered, "Oh no. I didn't mean there was anything bad about it. I just meant that I didn't know it was going to be so wonderful and thrilling".

Along the shore we discovered large patches of beautiful, translucent glasswort, crisp and tender, and already salted with natural sea salt. We took some of this and some of the tender orach that was growing nearby. As we walked through the forest toward the survival area where we were to cook our lunch, we found more than a dozen large chanterelles. This is one of my favourite mushrooms, so we didn't let them go to waste. We washed our catch at a pond, and then gathered a supply of cattail rhizomes, and many of the snow-white sprouts that would have been next year's cattails had we not destined them for a more glorious end. Around the camp area we found sheep sorrel and, despite the lateness of the season, a few sweet red raspberries.

We built a fire and put the clams, mussels and razor clams in a pot together and put them on to steam. The choke-cherries were boiled until soft, then mashed and strained and the juice thickened with starch from the cattail rhizomes. The chanterelles were slowly stewed until they were very tender. Meanwhile my wife, Freda, had concocted a wonderful salad of glasswort, orach, watercress and sheep sorrel, decorated with snow-white disks sliced from the cattail sprouts. We were ready for our first survival meal.

The choke-cherry soup, made entirely of ingredients we had gathered by the waysides, proved surprisingly delicious. I had expected it to need sweetening and was prepared to add some maple syrup, but since the cherries were ripe and sweet, it needed none. We ate steamed mussels, clams and razors until Gretchen remarked that some future archaeologist would discover the shell mound we were making and think that some primitive tribe had lived here for years. The stewed chanterelles were flavourful treats. The salad was a virile, tasty mixture that made ordinary salads pale. The watercress furnished a piquant pungency, the orach and glasswort were juicy tender greens and brought just the right amount of healthful sea salt. The sheep sorrel brought a pleasant acidity that made vinegar redundant, and the sliced cattail sprouts contributed a pleasant crispness. We used no dressing, and none was needed. The hot broth from the clam-steaming kettle was passed around in paper cups and was the ideal beverage to accompany this meal. We ate until we were so stuffed that even the tiny helpings of red raspberries that were our dessert looked almost too large to eat.

All the time we were preparing the food, cooking and eating, Lieutenant Brake and his instructors were watching our every move, taking notes and asking questions, while two photographers were ranging about, flashing bulbs in the dark forest or asking us to step into the sunlight to display some product or process. All this attention made Freda self-conscious, but the children and I proved to be incurable hams, and enjoyed performing for an audience.

We had gathered and prepared far more food than the four of us could eat, so our audience not only looked, but sampled. Lieutenant Brake tasted the choke-cherry soup and said, "Man! That soup has energy in every drop. A pilot who had to walk out of a remote area could get a lot of miles to the gallon from food like this".

Our first survival meal was pronounced an unqualified success by both participants and onlookers, and then we went to the Survival School where we were shown a display of the hundreds of ingenious devices a downed pilot can contrive to help him survive. There were tools, weapons, shelters and other survival equipment, made of the parachute and its pack, the wreckage of a plane, or by just using the materials that nature furnishes. The school is staffed by a group of competent and dedicated men who are vitally interested in their work, and they are probably the greatest survival experts alive today. I was highly gratified to find that all the instructors were perfectly familiar with both my books,

and gave them a prominent place in their survival library. I'm sure we learned much more than we taught, but the children and I were able to point out several valuable edible plants growing in their survival area that they had overlooked. In turn, they were able to show us some we had not encountered before. We could have spent many pleasant and instructive hours with these interesting and hospitable Navy men, but we were uneasily aware that we hadn't gathered any food for supper and breakfast, and that the sun was dropping ominously lower in the western sky.

We planned to go in cold, to a section of the Maine Coast we hadn't seen before, and see if we could scrounge a few meals from strange shores. The map showed a string of bridge-connected islands running out to sea, nearby, so we headed the Microbus for the outermost island that could be reached by road from the mainland. There we discovered a perfect little protected cove, only a few hundred yards across, where the water was comparatively calm. It was now high tide and all shore life was covered by many feet of water, but we found a little floating dock, behind a boat shop, and asked the owner's permission to fish from it. He graciously gave permission and also told us that the cunner were biting ferociously.

Ordinarily I don't enjoy taking children on a fishing trip, but these children are different. They are already competent fishermen, able to rig their own lines, bait the hooks, remove the fish and put them on the stringer without any help from me. I explained to them that the cunner, though delicious to eat, was likely to be very small and unexciting, but I was never more wrong. Gretchen had a 12½ incher flapping on the dock before I even got my hook in the water, and that was a larger cunner than I had ever seen before. There were plenty more where that one came from, and they fought like mountain trout. Soon we had the stringer crowded with larger cunner than I knew existed.

Our breakfast was assured before the tide receded and the fish stopped biting. Then we clambered over the wet rocks bared by the tide gathering periwinkles for supper and dog whelks for tomorrow's fish bait. Periwinkles are favourite shellfish in England, but few Americans even know that they are edible. Many people, even natives of this coast, are apt to confuse periwinkles, dog whelks and mud snails, although they are really far different creatures. When these differences were pointed out, the children learned to distinguish between them in about a minute, and thereafter never made a mistake. At one section of the shore the rocks gave way to a gravelly beach and just above high-water mark was a luxuriant

growth of orach, dark green, succulent and tender. We quickly filled a pail with the tenderest leaves and tops, for this is one of the finest of seaside vegetables.

On returning to camp I put the orach and periwinkles on to boil and started filleting the cunner we had caught. Here the two children proved they could be positive assets on a trip like this. Gretchen, who has a well-trained forager's eye, said she was almost certain she had seen ripe blackberries among the roadside brush as we had driven back to camp. She and Mark grabbed containers and ran back along the little dirt road, and just as supper was ready to serve they returned, each wearing a broad grin and each carrying a quart can brimming with sweet ripe blackberries.

Periwinkles are fine fare indeed when cooked with tomato sauce or in an omelet, but eggs and tomatoes were forbidden us on this trip, so we just boiled them in sea water, fished them from their shells with bent pins and popped them directly into our mouths, and found them delicious. These with plates of orach, cups of fragrant mint tea and bowls of sweet blackberries made a very satisfactory supper.

Next morning I filled our huge camp griddle with cunner fillets and cooked them to a light, golden brown. We used no egg, flour, cracker-meal or other breading and after tasting the result I resolved never to use a coating on cunner fillets again. They were crisp, firm-fleshed and utterly delicious. These fillets with all that were left of the blackberries made our breakfast, a bit limited in variety but unlimited in quantity. The children were filled with energy and eager for another day.

We decided to first explore the opposite shore and see what it had to offer that was edible. There we found thousands of green sea urchins clinging to the rocks just below the water. Our long-handled crab net, raked along the face of an underwater rock, would bring up a dozen or more urchins at each dip. Few Americans know that the orange-yellow roe of the sea urchin is a food more delicate and delicious than the finest caviar, although urchins constitute an important fishery in many parts of the world. I love to eat sea urchin roe with crusty French bread, but this was another luxury denied us by our self-imposed rules, so we ate it by the bowlful, with spoons. We made a fine lunch, right on the shore, of raw urchin roe, some leftover cunner fillets, and plenty of blackberries and even a few late raspberries which we found growing in the tangle above the shore.

We also collected another supply of blue mussels that were clustered on the rocks at low tide. On our way back across the

island we found a large elderberry bush, heavy with ripe fruit. In a marshy spot we found cattails and renewed our supply of starchy rhizomes and tender white sprouts. We reached our own cove in time for our daily fishing stint at high tide, but today we rigged our lines so each of us would have two hooks lying flat on the bottom and went for flounder. The flounder went for our dog-whelk baits too, and we soon had a nice string of one-to-two-pounders.

That evening we had a supper of two soups. The elderberries, cattail starch, and a little maple syrup made a very good Scandinavian-type fruit soup, and there was a very nourishing, almost-solid soup of mussels, a few shelled-out periwinkles, sliced cattail sprouts and a handful of dried day lily buds. Breakfast the next morning was browned flounder fillets and leftover elderberry soup, with a bland tea made of dried elder flowers.

The fruit soups proved to be wonderful accompaniment to our high-protein seafood diet, so after breakfast we drove to the next island, where we had seen a grove of choke-cherry trees hanging full of ripe fruit. We not only gathered a new supply of chokecherries, but nearby we found a wild apple tree, almost choked and completely hidden by the surrounding witch-hazel brush. Despite these handicaps it had managed to produce about a half-bushel of green-and-red striped wild apples that raw were hard, somewhat sour, and even a little bitter, but they tasted wonderful when cooked with a little of my precious maple syrup. I had told the children that blueberry season was completely over in this section of Maine, but again I was proved wrong. We found a little hillside meadow where blueberries could still be picked from clusters at the tops of the plants, and we gathered two quarts of them in about half an hour. We also found some excellent purslane and lamb's quarter in an abandoned field.

At high tide, when we went on the dock for our daily fishing ritual, Gretchen discovered that if she used a bobber and floated her bait about six feet deep she could catch some nice pollack. Mark and I used casting bobbers and shallow baits, and we managed to catch one good mackerel apiece. The next day was Gretchen's twelfth birthday and for breakfast I filleted the pollack she had caught, chopped the flesh fine, then worked it with a little salt water until it assumed a spongy texture, then patted it into small cakes and lightly browned them on both sides. These and big bowls of blueberries with cups of mint tea were our breakfast. Gretchen said the fish cakes were as fine as any birthday cake she had ever had, and we sang "Happy Birthday" before eating them.

For the first time we stayed around our cove during low tide, and we discovered that the bottom of this little inlet was literally crawling with huge rock crabs. I tried wading right out in the water and picking them up while the two children fished for them from the dock, with fish heads and a long-handled net. When it became obvious that their method was the better one, I gladly changed into dry clothes and joined them, still shivering. That Maine water is COLD. A lobster fisherman lifted his trap not 30 yards from the dock and it contained two large lobsters and five big crabs. To our horror he tossed those wonderful crabs overboard. When he heard Gretchen's cry of dismay he apologized profusely, saying that if he had known we wanted those crabs he would gladly have given them to us. However, we caught all we could use by our own efforts.

Supper that evening was a magnificent crab boil and a tossed salad made of six different wild plants. This was followed by a gelatin-like dessert, made of stewed and strained blackberries, sweetened with maple syrup and jelled by boiling it in a cheesecloth bag stuffed with the Irish moss that grew so plentifully at low-tide level. It tasted much like conventional fruit-gelatin desserts with a slight tang of the sea.

By this time we had lost all anxiety about whether or not we would be able to survive on wild food alone, and were concentrating on seeing just how well we could eat on wild fare. There were unlimited and easily available supplies of clams, mussels, periwinkles, sea urchins, crabs and several kinds of delicious fish. For vegetables there was a great abundance of orach, glasswort, lamb's quarter, purslane and cattail sprouts and for fruit we had blackberries, choke-cherries, wild apples and elderberries in great plenty, and by hard searching we could get quite a few red raspberries and blueberries. Our diet was adequate, nutritious, well-balanced and actually delicious for the most part. We ate fifteen consecutive meals, with absolutely no store-bought ingredients except a 39 cent bottle of cooking oil and a 9 cent box of salt. None of us sneaked any between-meal treats at the store, and none of us suffered from hunger. There was all the food that the four of us could eat, and the total cost of five day's food was less than 50 cents. It was "Summer time, and the living is easy".

Did I say easy? It would have been easy to find enough food to merely survive, but to eat well with a wide variety, on wild food alone, takes an inordinate amount of labour. We were on the go from daylight until dark and actually spent eight to ten hours per day just assembling our food, and several hours more cooking it.



Most of the gathering was great fun, but it does seem to me that altogether too much of the work was done squatting, stooping or bending. My soft muscles protested painfully. The children never complained of sore muscles, but each morning I would limp around like a cripple for an hour or so, until I got loosened up for the day. This survival trip was a glorious adventure and I thoroughly enjoyed it, but never let anyone tell you that living off the land isn't work, even in bountiful Maine.

On our last full day of this survival kick we decided to combine all the wonderful seafood we had been enjoying into one last magnificent boullibaisse. We were now experts, and assembling a supply of clams, mussels, periwinkles and sea urchins was quickly done. Our fishing yielded one mackerel, one flounder, four pollack of keeping size, half a dozen passable cunner and one beautiful tautog, a fish we hadn't caught at this dock before. When the tide went out we rigged our crab baits and began pulling in the crabs. When the dock was floating in only about four feet of water, I noticed Mark frantically motioning for me to come and look at his bait. I looked down through the perfectly clear water and immediately became as excited as Mark was. A huge lobster, with claws as big as my hand was attacking his bait. I slipped the long-handled crab net down through the water and jammed it against the bottom near the bait. Without a word being spoken, Mark knew just what to do. He slowly moved the bait into the mouth of the net and that stupid lobster followed it, and found himself flapping wildly on the dock. But, alas, Maine laws forbid out-of-staters to catch lobsters in even this fortuitous manner, so we had to throw it back.

The children insisted that the camp fire that was to cook our last foraged dinner be started with a flint-and-steel that Lieutenant Brake had given us. This was easily done but wasn't as primitive as it sounds, for we used a modern, civilized facial tissue for tinder. The crabs were dropped into boiling water until they turned bright red, and then the two children spent a full two hours picking out the meat. The periwinkles were boiled in salty water and turned over to Freda to remove them from their shells. I extracted the roe from the urchins, cleaned and filleted the fish, and started constructing the Boullibaisse.

I had found a few wild onion bulbs so I browned these in a frying pan with a cupful of sliced cattail sprouts. The clams and mussels were steamed until they barely opened, then the meat was removed and the shells discarded. The broth was decanted into another kettle to rid it of any grit, then the browned wild onions and

cattail sprouts were added to the broth, along with half a dozen bayberry leaves for seasoning. When it reached the boiling point I added the mussels, clams and periwinkles, then carefully lowered in the fish fillets so they wouldn't break apart. Last of all we added the urchin roe and picked-out meat of the crabs and the lobes— Oops! That's not right. We threw that lobster back!

We had no French bread or wine to add to this classical dish, and it probably wasn't the most delicious bouillabaisse ever made, but to our appetites, sharpened by hours of strenuous outdoor exercise, it seemed so. All those ingredients made a tremendous pot of stew, but we cleaned up every drop of it.

After this wonderful meal we lay around digesting our food and discussing our adventure, which was coming to an end. Both children agreed that they would love to continue this kind of existence for at least a week more, but school was starting and they had to go home. I asked each one what foods they had missed, and received some surprising answers. Gretchen said she had missed bread, cheese and milk. Freda had longed for salad dressing, tea and eggs. Mark said the only thing he had missed was beets. I like beets and frequently eat them, but it had never before occurred to me that anyone could crave beets. As for me, there was no doubt about what I had missed, it was coffee. I had even dug up some chicory roots, spent hours roasting them over the fire until they were brown and brittle, then pounded them up in a rag and boiled them like coffee. It was a dark hot beverage with a pleasant, bitter taste, but it wasn't coffee.

Next morning we breakfasted on fried wild apples, packed our gear and headed for home, with a good feeling about the country that had fed us so well. We had heard that Maine people were dour and uncommunicative, but we found them very friendly, generous and kind. The scenery had been magnificent and nature bountiful. In these few days there had developed between us and the Maine coast a love affair that would not be easily dispelled. We sang the Maine Stein Song at the top of our voices as we rolled across the border into New Hampshire. By noon we were in Vermont, and stopped at a beautiful roadside restaurant for our first civilized meal in more than five days. Gretchen ordered two grilled cheese sandwiches and a glass of milk. Freda took fried chicken, tea and a tossed salad with lots of dressing. I ordered a medium-rare sirloin steak and a whole pot of coffee, but Mark was going through his usual agony over dishes and prices. When I assured him that he could have anything he wanted, regardless of price, he heaved a final sigh, looked up at the pretty waitress

and said, "I want a bowl of clam chowder, fillet of flounder and a big dish of pickled beets".

[Euell Gibbons has also sent us this note :

*"Why should the readers of T. to T. be interested in a simple tale of a creative encounter with nature? It can hardly be called a survival trip but is better described as a family picnic where we picked instead of packed. I suspect that far too many of us are storming heaven's gates demanding that our relationship with the Infinite be revealed to us while we still have a very hazy idea of our relationships with plants and protozoans.*

*"I believe the only way man can discard his erroneous attitudes toward nature and acquire right attitudes is through greater intimacy with nature. I also believe that when a bridge is built between science and religion, the approach, from our end, will be through the biological sciences, especially through the study of the relationships of the various life forms to one another, the science of ecology. I don't mean the kind of ecology that is presently being taught in most universities which I consider a game called 'Let's pretend that humans don't exist'. Man must train himself to see the co-operation and interdependences that exist throughout nature as well as the competition and violence found there.*

*"What has all this to do with wild food? I have been accused of considering nature as no more than a free storehouse from which I can take gourmet food and new taste thrills, but this is not true. Wild food has symbolic meaning to me. It feeds my soul as well as my body. I acknowledge my dependence on nature by accepting the gifts she so freely offers. The food and beverages I prepare from wild ingredients are the bread and wine in which I have deep communion with nature, and with the author of nature".]*

# Unidentified Flying Objects

*Anthony Durham and Bernard Wignall*

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More than two hundred Unidentified Flying Object Reports are made in an average year in Britain. In the whole world, since the last war, more than one hundred thousand people have seen in the sky objects that they could not identify. A recent opinion poll in the U.S.A. found that more people have views about UFOs than have views on much more mundane subjects like political leaders. What is it that people see? What are the causes of all the public interest? Is there really a serious problem here, or is it just a modern myth?

On 24th April 1964, in Socorro, New Mexico, a policeman turned off the highway to investigate a loud bang that came from behind a low hill. What he saw had repercussions even in the U.S. Congress. In part it led to the setting up of the study group at the University of Colorado.

The object was a long "oval" standing on legs about 3 feet long. On the side of the object were markings in red. As he watched the object took off with "an ear splitting roar" and a flash of blue flame. By this time he had already radioed his sergeant and when the latter arrived, he found the bushes and grass still burning. There were four wedge shaped depressions around the burnt patch. Later these burns and depressions were examined by representatives of the army and the F.B.I.

This is not by any means a unique case. Many are stranger still, though most are far more trivial. However, it does illustrate the important point that honest respectable people have seen unaccountable phenomena that have left traces to show they were not just figments of imagination. Even one such case answers the third question above : there is a serious problem here. One hundred thousand people are entitled to an answer.

A hundred years ago men would have turned to religion for their explanations : today men turn to science. For science is the proper road to an understanding of what men can see with their eyes, while religion deals with the nature of man himself. But science has made its greatest strides in physics and allied fields that deal with reproducible phenomena. What can be observed in the laboratory today can be observed in the laboratory tomorrow. Not all life is like that, and UFOs present the extreme in unreproducibility. An observer could spend his lifetime on a hilltop

with a telescope and see nothing, so of necessity one must always deal with second-hand information. Add to this the adverse publicity and tomfoolery associated with the subject, and it is clear why UFOs have never received their due of scientific attention.

Now that scientific study of UFOs has become respectable there is an accumulation of folklore and misinformation that must be cut away to get at the truth. We need statistics of the number of reports made at different times and places. We need accurate accounts of what witnesses actually saw. We need a free transmission of information and a free discussion of what it means. We even need a new terminology to describe the process of investigation of the phenomenon. The crude data which comes from newspapers and third-hand stories is called a UFO Report. This is rarely accurate enough for research in any depth: for that an account must be obtained from the witness's own pen or lips. Then the investigator must attempt to sort out how much this has been distorted from the original sighting by memory and eyesight and the effects of publicity. Only at this stage is it possible to make a guess at what actually physically happened—to explain the Report in familiar physical terms or to admit that it must remain unidentified. A whole book could be filled with the fascinating things that give rise to UFO reports, from Venus to marsh gas, from weather balloons to ball lightning, but that is not our purpose now. Let us rather describe some of the facts that have been established about UFOs. These are few in number and, on the whole, poor in quality, but they must only be regarded as the first steps in grasping the subject as a whole.

The main fact is that, as mentioned above, there are several thousand reports of objects that people think unusual enough to describe to others in such a way that they attract publicity. These reports vary in detail from a pinpoint of light seen at night for only a few seconds to events that have caused nationwide headlines and have been investigated in depth by several people. Out of this body of reports we must sift what information we can.

Looking at reports on an individual basis we find that approximately 90 per cent. of them are of little or no use when we are interested in whatever was reported, i.e. either they have mundane explanation in terms of common man-made or meteorological events such as satellites, aircraft, temperature inversions, etc., or they contain too little detail to be worth while. Whether or not they are of use in sociological and large-scale studies will be discussed later. The remaining 10 per cent. or less are more interesting as they cannot be easily explained in this way. (In fact, some of the

most conservative figures for “unidentifieds” are the U.S.A.F. Project Blue Book files which out of about 10,000 reports have more than 650 unidentified.) These unexplained reports display various characteristics both in an individual and on an overall basis. An important case of the latter is that they are not localized in space or time.

By this we mean that UFOs are not “a purely American phenomenon” as Sir Bernard Lovell has been quoted as saying<sup>1</sup>—there are reports from practically everywhere on earth and even one or two from space!<sup>2</sup> Nor did the phenomenon start in 1947—people have been seeing unusual things in the sky and writing about them as far back as can be traced. However, within this overall picture we can find local variations that appear to be consistent. Two of the more interesting come from Jacques Vallee, who has postulated two “laws” and given statistical evidence for them. They are that (a) “The frequency of UFO reports is inversely proportional to population density” and (b) “The frequency of UFO reports is directly proportional to the proximity of Mars”.<sup>3,4</sup> In the statistical analysis for (b) Vallee used a list of about 1,000 sightings, mainly of French and American origin. His correlation was surprisingly good and came within a confidence limit of 0.001. At the same time he showed that there was no correlation with Venus, which might have been the case if it was just sightings of the planet that had caused the result. In order to check these results the test was repeated at Imperial College, London, by Pearson with a different set of data of 1,500 British reports. He found “there was indeed a marked correlation as Vallee had claimed”.<sup>5</sup> It is interesting to note also that the data he used was composed of all types of report—both the 10 per cent. unexplained and the 90 per cent. “junk” sightings! Of course, this is only a statistical calculation, but it is one of the more interesting oddities that have appeared in the subject.

There are well documented cases that involve objects being seen by independent witnesses several miles apart and also ones that have objects being seen by several people and tracked by radar at the same time. These seem to indicate that we cannot have a purely psychological explanation for the phenomenon, and that at least some of the unexplained reports have a physical basis. There are also some cases that have produced distinct physiological and physical effects. Examples of these effects are paralysis, burns, marks on the ground and stopping vehicles. To give specific reports of each of them would be tedious and they can be found in most literature on the subject; however, it is worth mentioning the case

of a lorry driver in Levelland, Texas, who, in November 1957, reported an egg-shaped object, 200 feet long on the road ahead, and said that his engine and lights died until the object moved off. The interesting thing is that there were ten independent reports of a similar object that night in the same part of Texas.

The people who report UFOs are a random selection of those "at risk" but it is worth noting that there is no lack of what must be termed "reliable witnesses". These include trained observers such as policemen and pilots, who would be expected to be familiar with most of the phenomena that are often reported. Indeed, they produce some of the most interesting cases as they are often in a good position to observe the sky. The reports tend to come in waves lasting several months. These are sometimes initiated by a sighting which receives a lot of publicity. A good example of this was in Autumn 1967 when two policemen saw an unusual light and chased it in their car for 50 minutes. This was headline news the next day and within hours reports were flooding in to the newspapers. It was only some weeks later when the numerous press cuttings were analysed that it was discovered that the flap had in fact started some weeks before but had received little publicity except in a few local newspapers.<sup>6</sup> This is an example of one of the main difficulties in any study of the frequency of reports, namely that we tend to measure the publicity that the subject is getting rather than the actual number of sightings at the time.

There are many photographs of UFOs and here we encounter a difficulty; almost all of them could be faked by someone with sufficient skill. We must then decide whether or not a photograph is genuine from considerations of the corroborative evidence and the photographer's character. It is important to realize that there are photographs which, if genuine, almost certainly prove the extraterrestrial hypothesis.

The question is inescapable and must sooner or later be faced—do the hard core of UFO Reports describe a visitation by extra-terrestrial intelligences? To deny the possibility of such visitation would be the height of intellectual arrogance. However, there are three main objections to the hypothesis that present-day Flying Saucers are in fact spaceships. First there is relativity, which forbids travel at speeds faster than light. Since the nearest star is just over four light years away, space travel can never be the simple commuting that science fiction sometimes makes out. Secondly, any space-craft entering our atmosphere at high speed must dissipate so much energy on deceleration that it produces a luminous track. Neither astronomical photographs nor radar shows

the expected number of unaccountable tracks. Thirdly, nearly all those UFO Reports that tell of intelligent responses by the objects, or of humanoid creatures, seem to hold a mirror up to human civilization. Very few are imaginative enough to have a ring of truth. Against all these arguments, of course, is the point that any galactic intelligence is as likely to be one million years more advanced as one thousand, so their science may have progressed inconceivably far beyond Einstein, and their culture may be so different that they conceal themselves from us by a cloak of ridiculousness.

The attraction of explaining some Flying Saucers as spaceships is that it is a unifying hypothesis, which explains many disparate observations. Any other single hypothesis to explain all the hard-core of reports is, in terms of current knowledge, at least as implausible—for example, a pseudo-psychological theory such as telepathic visionary rumours. The other theory that has most frequently been put forward is what we call *reductio ad absurdum*. Granted that 90 per cent. of all reports can be explained or otherwise excluded, could not the other 10 per cent. be beaten down to zero by sufficient hard work? Directly or indirectly most “official” pronouncements favour this theory, but it has one serious flaw. In order to explain the most obdurate residual cases more and more unlikely hypotheses must be piled upon one another, a philosophically unsound process going against Occam’s Razor.

There is a lot to be learnt about man from his reactions to the possibility of non-human intelligence. People do not want to know, will make any excuse to avoid knowing, will even distort any factual information presented to them. Military authorities label their files confidential. Journalists allow their reporting accuracy to slip alarmingly. Prominent scientists make fallacious statements rather than admit their ignorance. Ask the man in the street for his views on Flying Saucers and he will undoubtedly have some very curious ideas indeed. (We frequently receive the most startling confidences when interviewing UFO witnesses: the UFO investigator receives confidences that would be denied to any visiting pollster or priest.)

Most interesting of all is the tendency for believers in Saucerborne deliverance from the skies to gather together and form cult-groups. There must be a hundred or more way-out UFO societies in this country, some quite unashamed of their true nature, some masquerading as serious investigation groups. Indeed, most of the genuinely scientific groups have members who are really looking for the other sort of society. The distinguishing feature of the true cult-group is the uncritical acceptance of statements that



fit their belief systems. Conversely, the ultimate heresy is to study UFOs without preconceiving a conclusion about their nature. One may laugh at these modern Cargo Cults, but clearly they fill a definite need. Maybe they are a form of therapy for the stresses of modern life, in which people act out their conflicts by fantasy instead of by violence.

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There have always been unrecognized objects in the sky. Interpretations have varied, and description has been dependent on the mythology and technology of the time, but we can find links with our present day reports. What we call a spaceship was a flying shield to the monks of the eighth century,<sup>7</sup> and the pillars of cloud and fire fit in with our “vertical cloud cigar”. Interesting though these early sightings may be from sociological viewpoints, they contain little useful information.

It was only with the spread of newspapers that it became usual to cover reports in any detail and to link together different sightings. The newspapers tended to produce a more permanent account of a sighting within a short time of its occurrence. One of the first waves that has received the attention of researchers, was in Texas in 1897 when there were numerous reports of an “airship”—complete with inhabitants, who on one occasion were heard singing hymns!<sup>8</sup>

The next main series of UFO sightings came in the last war with “Foo Fighters”—small balls of light that followed aircraft. Both sides thought they were the enemy’s secret weapons.<sup>9</sup>

The current phase of the subject started in 1946 in Scandinavia when there were many reports of “ghost rockets” that flew over at high speed and usually disappeared out to sea. At first it was thought that they were German secret weapons being tested by the Allies but it was soon realized that this was not the case. The reports are consistent and largely unexplained but they received little publicity outside Scandinavia.<sup>10</sup>

Next year in the U.S.A. there were a few sightings that got only local news coverage until in June Kenneth Arnold reported that he had seen a series of saucer shaped objects near Mount Rainier. The resulting publicity established the phrase “Flying Saucer”: in fact the first UFO was described as a saucer in Texas in 1878. The number of reports increased dramatically and since then the pattern has been one of a few months or a year of very little activity, followed by a wave lasting two to three months. There have been

peaks in the frequency of reports in 1947, 50, 52, 54, 56, 57-8, 62, 64 and 67.

In any attempt to deal with UFOs in a systematic way it is important to realize that the data is the reports we receive. We can investigate thoroughly and try to guess what is the appearance and nature of an object, but we cannot deal directly with the object itself. Our examination falls neatly into three categories :

- (a) The investigation of each report to obtain as much information as possible about what was seen.
- (b) Looking at the large scale features of the sightings, testing for possible patterns of behaviour or appearance.
- (c) Psychological and sociological investigation of the witnesses.

Nearly all the work done so far has been in the first section, with many people merely collecting and evaluating reports. Unfortunately there is little consistency in evaluation, this being dependent on the technical knowledge and beliefs of the researcher. Trying to find a consistent method of evaluation is one of the major problems in any study of the subject.

It is not always possible to interview, although this is usually preferable, and it is necessary to use questionnaires. Some thought has been devoted to their design and two main types have emerged. One essentially contains a great many questions with yes/no/don't know answers, and the other asks the witness to describe features of the sighting in his own words. The latter has the advantage in that it produces more knowledge of the witness and tends not to "plant" ideas in his recollection of the event.

Good examples of (b) are Vallee's two "laws" mentioned above. Increasing emphasis is being placed on the data processing aspects and several machine readable files of sightings have been made. Computers are the obvious answer to a data problem involving more than ten thousand reports, each of which may need up to five 80-column cards to describe the main details. The advantage of approach (b) is that statistical methods may be employed and these make objectivity easier. Also, in this case, the 90 per cent. "junk" reports become useful in providing "control samples" for removing overall effects such as publicity.

The psychological and sociological interest in witnesses is one of the least covered fields in the subject. The questions of why many people misinterpret what they see, and how they are stimulated to produce hallucinatory sightings, are largely unanswered. Sociological work has been done on the cult groups but little on the less extreme cases of people who have seen a strange object

and are convinced that there is something unusual in the skies.

The scientific "pay-dirt" from a serious study of UFOs is quite varied and covers several disciplines. The most obvious and exciting result would be the discovery of unknown phenomena which could explain the remaining 10 per cent. of reports.

Secondly, the data gathered in the study contains information that is useful to people interested in other subjects. The files of UFO cases are now the natural repository for all manner of relatively infrequent events. In this way we find reports of ball lightning, otherwise untraced meteorites, various meteorological phenomena, many examples of distortion of visual data and even cases of rare visual defects.

These are but a few of the possible applications of the data, but they present a good case for a non-negative approach to the problem.

We have only been able to skim the surface of the subject, and a full bibliography would occupy several pages. The best available is to be found at the end of Vallee's *Challenge to Science*. As well as *Challenge to Science*, Vallee's first book *Anatomy of a Phenomenon* (Spearman, 1966) is also well worth reading.

Two books by one of the chief opponents of UFOs, Dr. Menzel, are among the best on the subject. They are *Flying Saucers*, 1953, and *The World of Flying Saucers*, 1963.

*Flying Saucer Review* is the most widely known magazine on the subject and most points of view find a place in it—essential reading for any reasonable study of the subject. There is also the *UFO Research Bulletin* which is a small circulation duplicated journal, which mainly limits itself to scientific articles.

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# Reviews

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*The Critical Historian*, by G. Kitson Clark. Heinemann. 30s.

This book sprang originally from a paper delivered at the British Association Meeting at Manchester in 1962 on the Teaching of History and "the application of the methods of historical scholarship as an antiseptic". It attempts to suggest "ways of criticism which may afford some protection to the ordinary man or woman when they are confronted with statements about history". Being instructive, clear and full of lively illustrations of the power of history to promote both truth and error, it deserves to be read and marked not only by history teachers but by all of us who, inevitably, frame our judgments from historical statements, whether from books, newspapers or hearsay.

History, by Dr. Kitson Clark's definition, can be "any attempt to describe what has happened before the actual moment of narration" and even if the matter related seems trivial it may have influence in increasing or decreasing prejudice. Besides, though it may be about some near-contemporary event, it may rest on a bias which survives from a remote past: as, for instance, the ecclesiastical conflicts of the Reformation or a war long since formally ended. He therefore begins by pointing out some of the dangers of history, such as the wrong uses or interpretation of words, disregard of context, propaganda and the inevitable fallibility and even bias of all human judgement. He proceeds to discuss the techniques which those trained in historical research have developed to counteract these dangers through a more careful use of history. He defines, with illustrations, what sort of questions should be asked about history, what laws of legal evidence and discoveries in science are available to test it, and what relation to "facts" historical statements need in order to be regarded as "true".

He realizes the relativity of much truth and the unknowability of the whole truth about anything. He also acknowledges the value of legend and myth in certain spheres and contexts, and the sort of truth which can be conveyed better in a novel than in a history book. He lays much stress on the uniqueness of individual men and women, their essential unpredictability and the intuition and imagination necessary to penetrate most human minds. Historians, he is careful to show, are themselves individuals, all biased in some directions according to how history has made them.

In the chapter on "History and the Natural Sciences" the contrast between the accuracy possibly obtainable in an experiment

in the exact sciences and all that can be hoped of historical accuracy is clearly described. In history, in contrast to chemistry, it is hard to isolate "facts" from their contingent background and never possible to repeat an historical situation as one might repeat a "scientific" experiment. Nevertheless, as Dr. Kitson Clark points out, "the conception of the expendable hypothesis could be of great value to historians, if they were prepared to accept it as a way of accepting opinions about history". Later, he points out what an important part, in assessing the probable in historical writing, is played by the readers' own experience. The knowledge, prejudices and general point of view of the reader or hearer of history are bound to colour his opinion of it. Indeed, they are bound to colour his opinion even of most scientific experiments.

This is the point that may be of most interest to readers of *Theoria to Theory*. For it is surely relevant to consideration of all sacred or mystical writings especially when these purport to be also historical. In the case of the Christian Gospels, for instance, different interpretations of these have continued to press upon their readers ever since they were written and are likely to go on in their variety so long as we continue to acquire new knowledge of the past as well as new experience in the present.

*En passant*, in considering the problems of historical evidence, this book asks, rhetorically, how we can know what Jesus really said in his lonely prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane (Mk. xiv. 32 fol.) or in his private dialogue with Pilate (John xviii. 38). It does not follow up the various problems here raised since it is not concerned with philosophical or theological issues. But for those of us who are so concerned, these examples provide good instances of how history inevitably impinges on our general view of things, of how, as history, it must be subject to the "critical historian" and of how it may still then have to be referred back to our own experience and general view.

It has been denied by some that there is sufficient evidence to regard the Gospels as history. So it would seem that the Christian who believes in the manhood of Christ, unless he takes the extreme Existentialist view, has first to examine—"critically"—the evidence for their being so regarded before he can get much further even with his theology. If satisfied that he has some history to go on, he must then ask what each evangelist really wished to convey; though the answer to this question is likely to remain open to debate for lack of certain evidence. Historians of the New Testament have been able to make plausible guesses at it which have led them to amazingly detailed interpretations of each Gospel; yet many of

their conclusions differ radically.<sup>1</sup> In the two instances quoted above, interpretation must partly depend on whether one supposes St. Mark and St. John to be telling their stories to illustrate particular points about Christian teaching, particular event-sequences in Jesus' life or particular traits of his character. Both could be doing all three of these things. But most historians suggest, from other known evidence,<sup>2</sup> that though both evangelists used their narratives to convey particular aspects of the Christ, irrespective of "historical" dating, St. Mark's Gospel does set out to be a record of memories whereas St. John's is more of a drama of "signs" concerning cosmic truth. In reading the story of Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane, therefore, it may be proper to ask whence comes the evidence. Was it, for instance, from the strange "young man" who later escaped naked from the clutches of the High Priest's rabble? Or some after-insight of St. Peter? Or does it just repeat a traditional early Christian prayer? But in the case of Jesus before Pilate, even if the dialogue were based on a report from a bystander, it should probably be read rather as St. John's way of conveying an ultimate truth about the Christ. In any case, all the Gospels are surely supreme examples of truth (as seen by the Evangelists) shown through a story—mounting to an anticipated climax and conclusion as all good stories should<sup>3</sup>—rather than through a sequence of historical events.

We return, then, to the part played by the experience of the reader in judging sacred history; since its truth for each one of us may depend not only upon all the available data about it in its contemporary setting, but also on its effect upon subsequent events and people, including ourselves. This last will depend upon the sort of people we are and the sort of experiences we have had. In assessing the significance of the Gospels, for instance, one should take account of them not only as historical documents written in a certain era, but of the history of the Church to which they gave rise, the visions and answers to prayer of the saints—and many

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<sup>1</sup> Compare, for instance, the picture of Jesus as presented in each of the following: A. Schweitzer's *Von Reimarus zu Wrede*, 1910, translated as *The Quest for the Historical Jesus* by W. Montgomery (A. and C. Black, London, 1954), F. C. Burkitt's *Earliest Sources for the Life of Jesus* (Constable and Co., 1910), R. Bultmann's *Jesus* (1934), translated as *Jesus and the Word* by L. P. Smith and E. Huntress (Ivor Nicholson and Walker, London, 1935) and D. E. Nineham's *Pelican, Saint Mark*. See also Nineham's BBC Broadcast Lecture *What Actually Happened* (BBC, 1965).

<sup>2</sup> See especially Professor Nineham's *Pelican on Saint Mark* and Professor C. H. Dodd's *Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* (C.U.P., 1953), also E. Guilding's *The Fourth Gospel and Jewish Worship* (O.U.P., 1960).

<sup>3</sup> See W. B. Gallie, *Philosophy and the Historical Understanding* (Lond., 1964).

not known as “saints”—some follies of religious fanaticism perhaps, as well as one’s own common sense, prayer experience and visions, if any: *theoria* to theory in fact. Attitudes to “extrasensory perception” might here be relevant (about which Dr. Kitson Clark has some pertinent things to say, p. 29<sup>4</sup>), as well as our childhood’s complexes, inhibitions and experience or non-experience of the love of Man.

At the beginning of this book there is a quotation from the Latin Vulgate of the Apocrypha (Lib. Tert. Esdrae Cap. IV. 38–40) about the abiding strength of Truth, whose just and rightful sovereignty was acknowledged by all men even above the wiles of women throughout all ages. This eulogy occurs in the Story of Zorababel, the captive Judean member of the Bodyguard of King Darius of Persia. It is part of a statement which Zorababel made in competing in an after-dinner bet to speak the wisest “sentence” and so win the king’s favour. Zorababel needed that favour to hold the king to his promise “vowed to the King of Heaven” to allow the Judeans to return to Jerusalem, to give them back their treasure and help them to rebuild their temple. King Darius applauded the praise of Truth, gave “victory” to Zorababel in the competition and, when reminded of his promise, accepted the implication and took the desired action.

One might say that Zorababel here was using mere eloquence about an idea to further his own particular end. But he seems to have struck a chord in the king, revealing to Darius a power above yet within himself which had to be obeyed even against reason or inclination. It was what the present Bishop of Durham might call a “disclosure situation”, illustrating on the one hand the deeply rooted intuition which acknowledges the ultimate value of truth where known and on the other the commonly held belief about it which is the condition of its operation. Truth does appear to be a power above all men. And yet—especially in human history—it depends upon their power of communication.

KATHLEEN OLDFIELD.

### **Magnificent but not the Revolution**

*Revolution in the Revolution?* by Régis Debray. Penguin, London, 1968. Pp. 126.

Twenty years ago the young and socially disillusioned read Camus and Sartre. Ten years ago it was Riesman, Galbraith, Whyte and

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<sup>4</sup> Dr. Kitson Clark points out that those who most vehemently deny the possibility of “supernatural or paranormal” phenomena often take no trouble to examine the evidence about them which, did they look at it with open minds, might surprise them.

Wright Mills. Camus offered courage and total responsibility; Whyte showed you how to cheat on aptitude tests for jobs. There had clearly been a lowering of tone. The current front runners are said to be Marcuse, Fanon, Laing and Debray. The common disillusion of all these authors are many layered; not only with western capitalist society and with Christianity, but above all with classical Marxism. There is an important name missing from the last list; a man who was not an author, but whose face looks down on the street from thousands of attic windows in Britain, Europe and the United States, Che Guevara.

Guevara was an Argentinian doctor, a member of the small band of fourteen who landed in Cuba under Fidel Castro, and took it over. Later he disappeared and Castro repeatedly said that Guevara had gone to direct revolutions elsewhere. Most western newspapers took that to mean that he was really dead. By the time they were proved wrong many years later he was in fact dead, though only just. He had been captured by the Bolivian Army and executed on direct but secret orders from President Barrientos. He was cremated quickly, and walls all over the world that had read "VIVA CHE" began to read "CHE VIVE". Most of the obituaries forgot to mention that he was the inventor of the *other* communist joke (Stalin is credited with "There will never be a revolution in Germany; they would have to step on the grass"), which he used to tell in Havana night-clubs just after Castro had made him Minister of Finance: Guevara had once told Castro that he was a communist, but Castro had misheard and thought that he had said he was an economist.

It is hard to explain his hold over the minds of the young: it is not simply that he was a martyr and a young one at that. His power came from his *activity*: he lived rough and fought injustice in a world of rich proletarians, bureaucratic communists and academic existentialists. Camus and Sartre got the cult of spontaneous action going again as coffee-time conversation: but Guevara was the existentialist armed. He was the man on the minds of the rioters in Grosvenor Square and the ghettos of New Jersey.

Che was unwittingly betrayed by Régis Debray, a young French philosopher who had studied under Althusser in Paris before becoming Professor of Philosophy at Havana. Debray went to Bolivia as a journalist to interview Guevara in the field for a French publisher and a Mexican magazine. He was captured by the authorities while walking down a street in ordinary clothes, tried by a military court, and sentenced to thirty years in jail. His



place of capture later led the Bolivian army to Guevara himself.

No one should be misled by last month's news that Debray has been moved to a "vacation jail". He is, and has been, suffering considerably from bad treatment and conditions. In spite of his enormous admiration for the guerrilla life he never led one: as one of his co-defendants has written, he has the typical physique of a European intellectual and is having a terrible time in a small town jail in the tropics. If Fidel Castro is the father of the Cuban revolution and Che Guevara its martyred son, then Régis Debray has become its spirit. Castro is unusual among outstanding communist leaders in that he does not seem to be in the process of producing daunting Collected Works. The theory of his revolution, such as it is, was entrusted to Debray who was given access to the files in Havana and then wrote *Revolution in the Revolution?* But nothing in that book is as lucid and courageous as its author's final speech to the court that condemned him, and I make no apology for reproducing a passage from it ("Ramparts", March, 68).

"He who has taken the revolutionary road exposes himself sooner or later to jail or violent death. I see nothing abnormal in this, no reason to be scandalized. But what I will never allow is that a political sentence based on an ideological offense be disguised as a criminal sentence; that a role be assigned to me in the guerrilla organization which I never played; and that a declaration of political and moral co-responsibility should be taken for a 'confession of guilt'. Guilt for what? And according to what criterion? Political? I admit. Criminal? Inadmissible.

"Let this be said: we will sentence him because he is a Marxist-Leninist; because he wrote *Revolution in the Revolution?*, a book that in his absence was read to a few guerrilla fighters; we will sentence him because he is a confessed and declared admirer of Fidel Castro and because he came here to talk to Che and was on guard duty two or three times within the camp, as was any visitor. Very good, I have nothing to object.

"But if I am told: 'We will sentence him because he twice entered the country as a spy, because he delivered maps to Che, because he gave a course to the guerrillas, because he was a political commissar, intellectual author of subversion or a combatant in ambush'—then I say no, I protest because all that is a series of tales, of lies entirely unsubstantiated".

My trinitarian remark may have been blasphemous but it was not inappropriate to its subject, for this book is full of theological

asides, and even the Manichees get a mention. Heresy is the language of the book because it is devoted to the defence of a heresy, a marxist form of Pelagianism. The book is a hymn to revolutionary guerrilla activism, and so an attack on theory, particularly marxist theory. If the accepted vehicle of grace to a marxist is the developing proletariat, led by a revolutionary party, then this is Pelagianism when it says that the revolutionary band achieves salvation by its own efforts.

But perhaps to mimic Debray's language of heresy is too melodramatic, for there are no heresies now. In that case closer parallels are possible; his work is marxist demythologizing, "the abandonment of dead theories inappropriate to our present situation." The parallel with Bonhoeffer and Bultmann could be traced in considerable detail. For whatever their critics say, Bonhoeffer and Bultmann have to be accepted as Christians because that's what they want to be. They want the same sorts of thing to be true as their opponents believe to be actually the case. If they have thrown the baby out with the bath water, nonetheless they still believe in baths. So it is with Castro and Debray; they are communists because they say they are, and because they would like there to be more revolutions, even though they no longer believe in the marxist theory of revolution.

Now Marx, it will be remembered, thought that his own discoveries were scientific ones. He thought that he had revealed the engine that drives history on: the economics of the class structure. Revolutions for him were not just gangs of men talking over power from each other; they were part of a large-scale explanation of things. As Marx put it himself, "Revolutions require a passive element, a material basis", and the material basis he had in mind was above all a high degree of industrial development. But it is the central paradox for all marxist apologists that the revolutions in this century that have looked to Marx for explanation and justification—in Russia, China and Cuba—have all been in undeveloped countries. In Russia Lenin, Trotsky and Stalin, and in China Mao Tse Tung, all struggled in their various ways to adjust orthodox theory to these unpleasant facts. Debray has simply given up the struggle: readers will look hard for any economic analysis in this book. The book is devoted only to Latin America, but the reader will not even be told that the area includes countries with enormously different degrees of economic development, from the almost European economies of Argentina and Uruguay to the rural emptinesses of Paraguay and Peru.

Marx taught that the proletariat would cease to be objects

passively carried along by history; by becoming self-conscious they would become its subjects, its principal actors. It was Lenin who first found this inadequate on practical grounds. In his famous essay "What is to be done" he put forward the view that the vehicles of socialism, like all science, are not the proletariat but the bourgeois intelligentsia. "Socialist consciousness", he wrote, "is something introduced into the class struggle from without, and not something that arises within it spontaneously".\* That view is much closer to the traditional view the Russian intelligentsia had of itself than to Marx. Debray's work can now be seen as an extension, almost a parody, of that view of Lenin's—for now it is not even the party that must spur the proletariat into action, it is the guerrilla band that must carry out the revolution alone, in despite of the masses *and* the communist party if necessary.

The trouble with this view is that it gives no reason for thinking that the struggles are likely to be successful—as indeed they haven't been, and their prognoses in Bolivia, Guatemala and Venezuela are all very bad. As with orthodox Marxism, no reason is given why one should want to join in to assist the inevitable. One can even disapprove of the inevitable. Debray takes it as self-evident that the governments of those four countries are bad, and should be removed. I willingly grant that, as would, I assume, Thomas Aquinas and any reader of this Journal. But most forms of Marxism have tried to buoy up the spirits by showing why social conditions should make a revolution succeed. Debray never does so. Perhaps that helps to explain the popularity of the Guevara-Debray mythos among the anti-technological young; its brave hopelessness, its ignorance and contempt for how the world actually works.

Marx wrote on a number of levels, and all the great marxist leaders have tried to follow him. One could construct a hierarchy of theories, whose marxist ranking would go :

- (1) DIALECTICAL MATERIALISM.
- (2) HISTORICAL MATERIALISM.
- (3) ECONOMICS-CUM-SOCIOLOGY.
- (4) REVOLUTIONARY TACTICS.

There are no *logical* connections between the levels: each level appeals to a different set of facts or instances. Now Debray deliberately sets out to stick to the bottom-most level; to write more like Clausewitz than Marx. He does, in fact, give some handy guerrilla tips here and there throughout the book, such as "always

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\*"What is to be done", p. 40 (Moscow edn.).

visit *every* house in a village so as not to incriminate any particular peasant" (p. 42). But the main weight of the work is bottom-level polemic against other marxist factions. They are (1) the Trotskyists, (2) the Maoists, (3) the orthodox Moscow communists. Unless that much is clear the main purpose and structure of the book will be obscure.

The theoretical picture is roughly as follows :

- (i) The Trotskyists want to work only through trade-union activity, which Debray criticizes in the section "Armed Self Defence".
- (ii) The Maoists want activity, but through a "mass line" and a "people's army". They want to feel (as Marx did) that the revolution comes from the people, and not from the party or a guerrilla band. They also distrust orthodox and respectable Moscow-line communist parties. The Chinese line is implicitly attacked in the sections "Armed Propaganda" and "The Guerrilla Base".
- (iii) The Moscow-line parties want to wait for orthodox industrial development in their basically peasant economies. Above all, they want firm party control over any guerrilla activity that there is. They are attacked in the section "The Party and the Guerrilla".

As I said before, there is no attempt at political or economic analysis in the book. There is a given goal of overthrowing certain regimes, and the best method is said to be by mobile self-sufficient columns with no attempt made to rouse or organize the peasants, or such workers as there are. Like Mao, Debray wants above all to avoid the *institutionalization* of the whole business :

"Hence the oft-repeated classic involution: a new revolutionary organization appears on the scene. It aspires to legal existence and then to participation in 'normal' political life for a certain time, in order to consolidate and make a name for itself and thus prepare the conditions for armed struggle. But, lo and behold, it is gradually absorbed, swallowed up by the routine of this public political life, which becomes the stage for its normal activities. It recruits a few members, a few activists, holds its first congress, mimeographs a newspaper and various bulletins. Then come the hundred annual assemblies, the thousand rallies, the 'first international contacts', the sending abroad of delegates (for there are many congresses to be attended), permanent representation with other organizations to be arranged, public relations

to be maintained. The balance sheet is always positive : functionaries function, printing presses print, delegates travel, international friendships grow, leaders are overwhelmed with work; in brief, the machine is in motion. It has cost dearly and it must be cared for. The organization is 'growing stronger' ” (p. 120).

The guerrilla band itself is to be the party, it is to provide its own mass-line, its own society and comfort. *Extra ecclesiam. . . .*

The most often quoted section in the book is the first paragraph : “We are never completely contemporaneous with our present. History advances in disguise; it appears on the stage wearing the mask of the previous scene, and we tend to lose the meaning of the play” (p. 19). Debray’s main point is that the explanations that Lenin, Trotsky and Mao gave of their own revolutions do not provide lessons for future ones in Latin America. His task is, then, to show that this generalization does *not* include the Cuban revolution, which *does* have lessons for the future of Latin America.

He has some very good points to make while arguing that case; especially that the history of Algeria has shown the danger of having an emigré party separate from a revolutionary army; and that China is in a number of important ways different from Latin America; it has a denser population and had a colonial war going on at the material time, and so on.

But none of this is enough to remove the suspicion that as to methods (though not goals, of course) the whole thing is pointless militarism, infantile marxism, magnificent but not the revolution. The indian peasants seem quite unmoved by the ministrations of these large white men with sub-machine guns. They betray them, as they would betray any gringo, after suitable reward or threat. At one point Debray says of Maoism that it has been a *succès d'estime* in Europe, a “politically becalmed region” (p. 124), but not in South America. The posters in the universities and attic windows of Britain say much the same for Debray himself.

One item of presentation obscures things unnecessarily : the word “foco” is untranslated throughout, though a translator’s footnote (p. 22) assures us that it means “centre of guerrilla operations rather than a military base in the usual sense.” In fact it means neither, as the contexts of its use make progressively more clear. By the time one gets to p. 105 and finds “The vanguard party can exist in the form of the guerrilla foco itself”, one is convinced that it means simply “guerrilla band”.

YORICK WILKS.

## Posthumous Letter

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### *Should a scientific religious approach be Christian?*

My conviction is that in any philosophic or scientific enquiry one must remain open-minded as to the specific conclusions to be drawn, i.e. Christian or otherwise. That is to say, as an empiricist, my feeling is that one's endeavour must be susceptible of disproof (in this case possibly disproof of Christianity) and therefore, a specific form of religion should not be held out as the end in view. Having as a goal the scientific understanding of religion, where religion is perhaps thought of as initially conviction as to the nature of the controlling power of the universe together with its worship, seems to me entirely proper.

For example, I am prepared to entertain a belief in the Resurrection if in PRINCIPLE it is possible for anyone, not just Jesus of Nazareth.

Then, as to the Eucharist, this to me was historically a useful symbolic act, appropriate to the culture of the times, but now lacking in meaning for many, including myself. Under such circumstances participation becomes at best a bit of "hocus-pocus" and at worst a lie.

Next I would tend to extend de Chardin's view to say that all living matter is a part of God, in other words enlarging his "noosphere" so that one has a hierarchy of parts. Here I think I would be close to early Hinduism where the gods and goddesses were originally considered simply as aspects of the one God. How could views such as these claim to be Christian?

Then, turning back to methods of scientific procedure, I see no objection, in fact many advantages, despite the above remarks, in using some specific form of early Christian contemplative practice as a phenomenon to be investigated. Or again, if a group wants to use a ritual in order to gain insight into the meaning of religion I can see advantages to that. I also see a possible advantage in group contemplation. However, I myself prefer to dispense with ritual as far as possible and I don't feel that group activity is absolutely necessary to establish a genuine relation between the individual and God, although, of course, I recognize the dangers of the solitary approach. In connection with contemplation, either of the group variety or the solitary, there is obviously present a difficult problem. It is impossible to maintain the objective view appropriate to scientific endeavour and at the same time lose (or

find) oneself in a religious practice. My own view, springing from experience, is that one must take the two views alternately.

In the light of all the foregoing I would hope that a joint conviction in the significance of contemplation in one form or another would bind us together.

**MICHAEL M. HARE.<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> See notes on contributors.

## Comment

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### *Two Legging's Vision*

I am puzzled by Thomas Merton's review of *Two Leggings* by Peter Nabakov. "There was something spiritually and physically authentic about the religious culture of the Crow Indians. It helped them to adapt very well indeed to their stone age situation. Not only that, we must certainly recognize a universal psychic validity to the concept of encounter with a "vision person" (purely subjective if you like) as a protector and mentor in one's chosen way of life. After all, Catholics still believe (some of them at least) in Guardian Angels".

If the encounter with a "vision person" was "valid", "authentic", I don't understand how it can be "purely subjective if you like"; though every human experience is *in some degree* conditioned by subjectivity. If one is in contact with the spiritual world in some authentic way, does this mean that one is in some sense in contact with God? The Hebrew experience of God contains, as at least one element, the fact that God interferes with and intrudes upon "one's chosen way of life". "Thus saith the Lord, I cannot abide your feasts. . . . What doth the Lord require of thee but justice and mercy . . .?"

Finally, if one comes into contact with God, and receives protection and support, and then is overthrown by intolerable defeat, as the Indians were, does He abandon you, to the point at which "Nothing happened after that"? This again was not the Hebrew experience in exile. The Christian experience also has shown that the "vision person" moves the human person to amazingly creative ability to cope with tragic and overwhelming novelty in the life-situation. The keynote of Hebrew-Christian experience has been "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee".

I feel there is need to face the question whether the "vision persons" whom the Indians encountered were Guardian Angels or "the other kind who was on good terms with Faust". This is a question of immense moment to ourselves. One of the most devastating aspects of Hitler's achievement was that he was able to elicit such devotion, especially from the young, but not only from them, as to attract the comment "This is a religion". In fact, he enabled them "to cope very well indeed" with their post-depression situation. We seem to be at war not only with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers; the discerning of spirits seems to be a very pressing problem.



One fears that belief in the goodness of God is going to turn out to be part of the naivety of Jesus, which mankind, having come of age, is obliged to leave behind; that it is "thinking like a child", a fantasy of infancy, which enables the immature to "cope very well indeed" with an early phase of life. Is Hinduism more adult?

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Thomas Merton replies: "Perhaps I was not clear. I hope I can clarify a little.

(1) 'purely subjective'—in the sense that valid spiritual energies in the person were released and activated, but that this was experienced as if they were objectified in a 'vision person'. This is just a guess, and I am not declaring that it was what happened. Of course, in spiritual encounters of any kind the idea of a subject-object relationship is misleading.

(2) After all, the Hebrews were in exile for a long time, were they not? And for two thousand years they were anywhere but in the Promised Land. The Indians have not been entirely abandoned by their spirits (whatever they may be). Indian religion still exists, though of course, it is 'underground' and is practised and understood only by very few. It is however quite alive, and it does provide at least a few people with strength to overcome despair.

(3) I certainly do not feel that we can dismiss the Indian contact with spirits simply as 'devil worship' as some missionaries did in the past. Animism and shamanism can, it seems to me, have a certain validity which I myself would hesitate to define, because I simply don't know how to. But I would agree that the discerning of spirits is always a problem in this kind of thing, whether it be a matter of Crow Indians or twentieth century urban people. My main point about Two Leggings was that he cheated, more or less consciously, in his manipulation of a religious system. This, of course, renders his entire religious experience suspect. I thought my article made that clear. But it does not invalidate the whole Indian religion.

(4) Hinduism, of course, is a very complex religion. Relatively few Hindus confine themselves to a highly sophisticated worship of an impersonal Atman. Besides the devotion to God in one or more personal manifestations there is, of course, plenty of room for a cult of gods and spirits in Hinduism. For my own part I don't go in for declarations about which religion is or is not 'more adult'. In all religions there are various levels of depth and

naturity. This includes so-called primitive religions. I think evidence can be found of very great depth in primitive religious experience, including authentic mysticism (which would be something more than seeing one's 'vision person'). I can only repeat here that I was taking Two Leggings not as an example of that kind of attainment, but as an example of failure due to selfish exploitation of religious methods to attain a personal and, so to speak, mundane ambition.

And that is obviously Faustian, I agree.

I must confess that I did more or less mean to imply that where religion is institutionalized in a power structure and justifies the aims of that structure, it loses its religious validity. In other words, I seem to have had in mind other, more contemporary religious warriors in the land which once belonged to the Indians”.

### *Go East, Stay East*

In his thought-provoking comments in the last issue, William Kirkpatrick takes up Richard Saumarez Smith's suggestion that the sufferings of those who are turning East may be a part of the birth pangs of a larger process, the regeneration of the West. As one who believes that they are, may I first of all protest against the tendency to link the taking of drugs with “going East”, as though these are two parts of a single process. There is no such link: a Yogi, for instance, would be the last person to resort to drugs, and the fact that some—or many—Westerners who have become drug dependent are also interested in turning to the East is surely because, instead of struggling along the hard road to the point where it is possible to find bliss through “samadhi”, they have tried to take a short cut and have come to grief because there is no short cut.

Kirkpatrick lays stress on the importance of the personal and I agree with him wholeheartedly, but surely man is not being used as a commodity today any more than in previous ages, when he/she was, for instance, the serf of a Russian aristocrat, the slave of an American cotton planter or a Victorian wife. The obstacles have changed but “the more things change, the more they remain the same”, and it is neither more nor less difficult for present-day man to discover why he is here and what to do about it than it ever was: it is simply the most difficult thing in life because the most worthwhile. What is encouraging is that a large proportion of young people in this generation are interested in attempting to find out.

Kirkpatrick also suggests that those who turn East are running

away "anywhere to escape the vacuum", but many set out with the positive intention of making discoveries and find it possible to build upon their discoveries. Though he stresses the importance of the personal he does this impersonally, that is : from the outside, whereas the kernel of the matter is to discover what in fact goes on in the mind and soul of one person which leads him or her to "go East". Since one can have this knowledge only about one self, I can only record my own totally drug-free experience for—long before it became fashionable—I had "gone East" and was regarded as having reverted to paganism until I was overtaken by the fashion and was greatly amazed to find myself "with it".

After having been brought up strictly as a low church Anglican, I turned to the East for answers to vital questions to which (in my view) Christianity provided no answer. As a small child I referred quite naturally during the course of conversation to having lived before because I remembered snatches from previous lives and accordingly took reincarnation for granted. I was told that I was entertaining a heathen notion. You began when you were born, but your spirit lived on after you died. I objected that, if your spirit could live after you were dead, there seemed no reason why it should not live before you were born. I was told that "Christianity said" it did not. Since I could not reject what I "knew" to be true, I began to reject Christianity which insisted that my truth was not true.

At boarding school, where I first encountered unfairness on a large scale, reincarnation mattered for another reason : without it there could be no justice. Christianity claimed that God was both all-powerful and all-loving but, if he were, surely he would use his power to prevent suffering. If reincarnation is admitted, justice is satisfied : you are reaping what you have sown; the law of karma is operating; there is no injustice—the problem vanishes.

No doubt I took these problems more seriously than the average schoolgirl, but only because I had to, being at a strict Evangelical school, where each day's work began with a Scripture lesson and we had four lots of prayers each weekday. As for Sundays. . . .

Those Scripture lessons brought home to me that I did not—could not—like Jesus, much less love him because at the age of twelve he treated his mother with what seemed to me callous inconsideration and did not even apologize when she said she had "sought him sorrowing" for three days; because he acted petulantly about the barren fig tree and because he frequently said that he would cast those who rejected his teaching into "a furnace of fire : there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth".

At a later stage, I found it impossible to accept *any* personal God : it was limiting to the illimitable to squash it into human form. The Eastern description, "That Which is Beyond", was for me the only fitting one.

At about 6th form level I became enthralled by the ancient Greeks and their "beauty is truth, truth beauty", and it seemed that Christianity had blurred this distinction being (for instance) willing to worship in an ugly building, while many "good" Christians seemed to regard beauty as unimportant, even suspect.

My final objection was to C. of E. type prayers, which seemed mostly "gimme, gimme" and you never got what you asked for, so it was all very frustrating, whereas meditation (latching on to the Source) was enormously worth striving to achieve as the means of raising consciousness to a higher level.

I made my "discoveries" alone, having no guru and no sympathizers. Books only. These were enough because I found answers that satisfied me in the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, the Upanishads, the Bhagavad-Gita, the Dhammapada, *Concentration and Meditation*, a manual of mind development published by the Buddhist Society, *The Way of the White Clouds* and several more remarkable publications by Lama Anagarika Govinda, and many other books about Yoga and the various Eastern philosophies.

I know now that my objections are not particularly good intellectual points (I was and am no intellectual) and can be swept aside by various Christian arguments, but this is a true record of what actually happened and of rankling objections which proved unanswerable at the time and which, I believe, must be worrying many of those now "going East".

As far as I am concerned it is too late to revert. I like it in the East and I intend to stay.

ELIZABETH FRENCH.

10 McTongue Avenue, Bosham, nr. Chichester.

*Amy, Andrew and the nature of spiritual growth*

Amy and Andrew's cirenic dialogue was a pleasure to read, but if anybody thought he was witnessing a confrontation of East with West, let him think again. What actually happened was a meeting of two people of all-or-nothing spiritual temperament, related by the same high western culture and a Cambridge background, each in their several generations having embarked upon the most adventurous spiritual quest which was open to them in the circumstances of their day.

In Amy's day, or indeed my own in the first half of the century, it was still possible to find an exotic, non-establishment spiritual discipline within the christian faith. There was much the same glamour in the cowled or coifed figures of the spiritual directors of those days as there is now about the saffron robe of the eastern monk, and there was also a genuine spiritual depth. Andrew comes into a world in which Christianity speaks without power to a generation which longs for spiritual greatness, because the ordinary individual counts for nothing any more, so he needs and searches for the protection and guidance of a single all-powerful saint. And because the world is now geographically one, he finds an eastern discipline and a living master being offered to him in a guise which is as strange and unmuddled for him as the other was for Amy. When they meet, therefore, Amy and Andrew find much common ground; they are in strong agreement about their method of prayer, which is mystical prayer of the devotional or "bhakti" type; and on their need for a living master. They only fail to come to terms on their world-myth or metaphysic, which gives each a different sense of "living master".

All this raises doubts which could only be cleared up by imagining another dialogue on the same subjects between two easterners, for example, the great master of Beas who died in 1948 and the christian Sadhu Sundar Singh of the same generation. Each of these was a Punjabi Sikh, each was brought up on the sikh scriptures, the Granth, and practised a yogic type of meditation, each assumed the need for a living master. What divided them was that Sundar Singh was converted to Christianity, when on the point of despair and suicide, by a tremendously sikh-like vision of the radiant form of Christ, whom he then felt to be alive and so took as his living master. But an account of the rest of their lives would almost certainly make us feel that each was much more like the other in his spiritual outlook and needs than either of them are like Amy or Andrew, just as Amy and Andrew are more like each other than either is to his eastern co-religionist.

So we are faced with the question : Is there a universal pattern of prayer, which tends to take on different emphases in different cultures, climates or temperaments? Or is it nonsense to talk about this because, try as we will, we shall always be looking at and experiencing prayer through the lens of our own metaphysic and our own culture? Also, could there be an overriding conception of the "living master", or again are we obliged by our beliefs to see this *either* in its christian *or* in its Sikh form?

I do not know the answers, but I feel that it cannot profit us

much to compare the practice of prayer in different cultures until we have at least tried to tackle this problem scientifically. Eastern and western mystics have always indicated that prayer is a network of spiritual growth patterns and stages; and if this is so, it will surely be found to have a corresponding psycho-biology, which can be empirically studied and charted.

GLADYS KEABLE.

3 Lingholme Close, Cambridge.

I thought the last issue of *T. to T.* exceedingly interesting (all the numbers have been this, in their different ways). Your point about the tutor and the pupil's radiant form was a particularly nice one. Andrew's point about "beating death" was highly significant. I thought the Christian end of the dialogue very well handled too.

It seems to me sometimes that the whole world at this period, or at least the European-Asian axis, is in a religious state something like ancient India, or like the gnostic world at the time of Christ.

Making a bridge between science and religion is the aim of *T. to T.*, if I follow you rightly. And inasmuch as it is not only one religion, because your friends belong to more than one, then it is not a lot of comparative religion you want—because, as the last Principal of Manchester College said, "if you have too much of that, it is difficult to remain even comparatively religious"—but anything that leads to an understanding of how the religious mind works and deepens. For that, it seems to me, it is important for people to remain within the framework of their own tradition. If there is too much attempt at blending of technique and practice from different beliefs, then one can fall into the danger of an illusion of progress without the check of a real criterion. (One of the advantages of a teacher is that he boxes one's ears if one thinks one has got anywhere.)

FREDA WINT.

50 Parktown, Oxford.

*Why ignore traditional theory?*

It is not easy to see what *Theoria to Theory* hopes to gain by studying Sant Mat as representative of Eastern thought. Any student of Indian philosophy will recognize that the background to Letter 157 is the wisdom of the Upanishads, of which the fundamental notion is the knowledge that Atman is Brahman; or as Deussen expresses it in his *Outline of the Vedanta* "that Brahman, that is, the eternal principle of all-being, the power which creates all worlds, sustains

them and again absorbs them, is identical with the Atman . . . namely with that in us which when we judge rightly, we acknowledge as our own self, as our inner and true essence. This self in each one of us is not a part of Brahman nor an emanation from him, but it is fully and entirely the eternal indivisible Brahman itself”.

It may well be true that the study of philosophy or religion “pursued academically helps us very little”, but the investigation of a small sect which seems to have as two of its virtues that “you can find out a great deal about their practices” and that it is “scientific at least to the extent that it is prepared to go indefinitely into detail of some sort” does not offer much more hope of understanding.

The Vedanta—and every serious world-view—presents an integral unity from which it is not possible to “divide off questions which can be separately investigated”, if by separately is meant in isolation from the rest of the system. If modern science is only able to look at the world externally in bits and never to conceive it innerly as a whole, then modern science is not a fitting instrument for the understanding of the ancient wisdom. But it would be a mistake to believe that science must always proceed in this fashion.

It is evident that the sponsors of the Journal have not tried very hard to think into the ancient wisdom or to study the works of its more accessible exponents, else the editor would not lump together Rudolf Steiner, Gurdjeff and Theosophy as “partly Westernized forms of Eastern teaching”. For anyone to whom the traditional Indian philosophy is too dry and academic the study of Theosophy is probably an easier approach so long as he is prepared to be mentally flexible and think into the mythology it uses. But without being grounded in such thinking—and this does not mean grasping it with the intellect (which is impossible) or believing in it (which would be uncritical), but accepting it with sympathy and understanding as a possible view of the Universe—can anyone hope to understand Sant Mat? And for one so grounded it may no longer be found necessary to do so.

This journal claims to be trying to go from *theoria* to theory, yet its sponsors apparently prefer the “*theoria*” of Sant Mat to the underlying “theory” of Indian thought. And they wholly ignore the “theory” which stares them in the face in traditional Christian doctrine. They seem to reject much—if not most—of it as “sermon talk”, which cannot pass their rigid scientific tests of intellectual intelligibility and experimental testing. And so in their fear of leaving the safety of the external world perceptible

to the five senses and the dualistic intellectual type of thinking that goes with it, they relapse into the hope that para-psychology and researches into ESP will provide material proof of the existence of spiritual worlds.

The Church itself led the way into the materialistic intellectual period through which we have been passing, when in 869 the eighth general council at Constantinople declared that man was composed not of body, soul and spirit, but of body and soul only, spirit being an attribute of soul. This denied to man the triunity of three equivalent hypostases which is affirmed of God, and set up a dualism of body and soul which gradually pervaded all man's thinking. It is well exemplified in *T. to T.*, Vol. 1, No. 3, in which Margaret Masterman tried to dualize the Christian Trinity with the aid of Boolean type logic. But how can anyone who is unwilling to experience the "metanoia" or change of mind necessary to think imaginatively into the Christian Trinity or the trinities of Indian thought, in Sat-Chit-Ananda or the three gunas, hope to study Sant Mat with understanding or think seriously about Christianity?

Valdimir Solovyov expressed the difficulty well in his Lectures on Godmanhood (Lecture six), in which he wrote :

"We must note that the general idea of the triunity of God, being as much a truth of contemplative reason as of revelation, never encountered any objections from the most profound representatives of contemplative philosophy. . . . Only to the externalist, mechanistic intellect does this idea appear incomprehensible, to the intellect which does not consider the inward connection of things in their integral being, does not discern the one in the many and the self-differentiation in the one, but regards all objects in their one-sided abstract exclusiveness, in their separateness, and in their outward interrelation in terms of space and time. . . .

"(Such persons) sincerely accepted Christian ideas as the creed of faith, but because of their mechanistic mentality were unable to conceive those ideas in their contemplative verity. Hence we see that many Fathers of the Church considered Christian dogmas, especially the fundamental dogma of the Holy Trinity, as something which cannot be comprehended by human reason . . . (possibly regarding) the limits of their own thought as the limits of the human mind in general".

In this dilemma a long and careful study of the works of Rudolf Steiner would be of the greatest value, for he is not only an admirable exponent of the ancient wisdom, but, unlike either Gurdjeff



or Theosophy, is profoundly Christian in his thinking. And underneath the mythology he uses will be found a more critical and truly scientific approach than is evident in many so-called scientists. It is not necessary for such a study to accept the mythology as "true", but only as thinkable. Many truths are not expressible in our present-day language because we have not developed the concepts or the thinking to cope with them. Such truths speak to the human heart and not only to the intellect; this is why we still need mythology—though it might more properly be called an anti-mythology—that the world can be cut up into little bits and each bit examined and described in isolation from the rest and that this somehow gets us nearer the truth of things.

HARRY C. RUTHERFORD.

114 Richmond Hill, Surrey.

### *The Mysticism of Rudolf Steiner*

In the last number of *Theoria to Theory* (July 1968) the editorial was devoted to a discussion of Eastern mysticism, in particular to the doctrine of the "Living Master" as taught in the community at Beas in the Punjab. Reference was also made to Western mysticism and among the modern mystics mentioned by name was Rudolf Steiner. Believing as I do that Rudolf Steiner has initiated a new kind of spiritual thought in Europe in this century which proves most fruitful both in principle and in practice, I wish to point out the following fact. There is a radical distinction between such a modern mystical path and that which is put forward as the doctrine from Beas. The latter method is of the time-worn Eastern kind with an ancient history. The rules of the spiritual path have not altered in the East, however many masters have repeated them down the centuries. This may give to some people a sense of confidence in such teaching. Whether this is so, or not, it remains a fact that Rudolf Steiner has brought an entirely different outlook to the subject. He has outlined a spiritual path for modern times and for Western people. The distinction has been overlooked in the editorial.

The core of Rudolf Steiner's thought is a concept of world-evolution through which runs the thread of changing human consciousness. From this point of view the human mind is not stationary the same at all times in history, related to the Divine World in the same way through the centuries. Rather, a crisis is reached in our human development to be compared with the change that happens in a single lifetime, when official education is over, when

the student on a grant becomes the man with a job, who can expect to take his own responsibility at work and at home. This is reflected psychologically in the urge felt in the modern soul to think for one's self and to make one's own decisions. It is seen in the history of our time in the urge to bring under human control the affairs of society, which were arranged earlier by old tradition or respect for Divine Law. A properly adult person needs to find authority in his own conscience and the social conscience which he shares with his fellow-men. This was not always so. The surrender of all one's ability to act and think to a living Master was once a right means of spiritual advancement. Today it implies a return to childhood, the surrender of the self-responsibility, which is the natural duty of a modern, adult person. It does not help someone today to become childishly dependent on the authority of a fatherly Master. In fact, to do so is for a modern Western person to opt out of the stage in human consciousness that has now been reached. To live and work with the fact of changing consciousness should be the special contribution of people in the West to the spiritual evolution of Mankind. The sense of time among Eastern people is naturally directed towards changelessness, to the repetition of the same.

The methods used for becoming aware of and awake to the realities of the Spiritual World alter of necessity with the changes in human consciousness. Today the human soul is not led towards the Spirit but has to make the approach out of his own will. The means by which a modern person can begin to do this, through his personal determination, are described in Rudolf Steiner's *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds*. There is no sign in this book of a violent break with old traditions, such as those still known to the Masters in the East, but there is a new beginning, a transformation of the old into the new methods suited to the self-responsible mind of today. It is part of the new situation that the information and advice in Rudolf Steiner's book is not given to chosen pupils but is published for anyone who chooses to read. The reader is responsible for following the method himself. There is nevertheless a certain spiritual reality behind such a book. The new relationship to a spiritual leader, to the spiritual Beings who look for meetings with human souls, to the Being of Christ Himself, is a conversation. The pupil who is commanded and obeys is replaced by the seeker, who intends to open a conversation. The author of the book, the spiritual Beings, Christ Himself are those who answer, in the form of a spiritual conversation in thought.

Rudolf Steiner offers an opportunity to us modern people. To

find a spiritual path it is necessary to go, not away from Christianity, but deeper into it. To be a seeker for the Spirit one need not retreat into an old past; one can go ahead with enthusiasm into the future.

EVELYN CAPEL (DERRY),  
*Minister in the Christian Community.*

Temple Lodge, 51 Queen Cardine Street, W.6.

# Sentences

## The Guru's Love\*

*You may come to him for a few seconds, then go away and do whatever you will. His love is unchanging.*

*You may deny him to himself and to yourself, then curse him to any who listen. His love is unchanging.*

*You may become the most despised of creatures, then return to him. His love is unchanging.*

*Go where you will; do what you will; stay however long you will; and come back to him. His love is unchanging.*

*Abuse others; abuse yourself; abuse him; and come back to him. His love is unchanging.*

*He will never criticize you; he will never minimize you; he will never desert you. Because, to him, you are everything and he himself is nothing.*

*He will never deceive you; he will never ridicule you; he will never fail you. Because, to him, you are God—nature to be served and he is your servant.*

*No matter what befalls, no matter what you become, he awaits you always. He knows you. He serves you. He loves you.*

*His love for you, in the changing world, is unchanging. His love, beloved, is unchanging.*

---

\* These lines on the ideal of the Living Master (see *Theoria to Theory*, II, iv) were given to us from papers circulated to the Beas Community. The follower of Sant Mat who circulated them can no longer trace their source.

## NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

**Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker** has had thirty years of research in nuclear physics, astrophysics and the foundations of quantum mechanics, and is still actively working on quantum theory. Professor of Philosophy in the University of Hamburg since 1957, he is deeply engaged in problems connected with atomic weapons and world peace. Gifford Lectures, *The History of Nature, The World of Physics*.

**Martin Garstens** has researched into solid state physics, biophysics and the philosophy of science. He is at present connected with the Physics Department of the University of Maryland, and the Office of Naval Research, Washington.

**Jerome Perlinski** is Professor of History and Theology at Webster College, St. Louis, Missouri. He has studied at the Teilhard Foundation in Paris as the recipient of its first fellowship. He took his degrees at St. Louis University in Modern European History, with an emphasis on Marxism and Leninism and the History of Ideas, especially contemporary European Thought.

**Euell Gibbons** was born in the Red River Valley in Texas and spent most of his boyhood in the hill country of New Mexico. Later, he lived in many different states—California, Washington, Hawaii, New Jersey and Indiana. During his travels he has been a cowboy, hobo, carpenter, surveyor, boat builder, beachcomber, newspaperman, schoolteacher, farmer, and a staff member of Pendle Hill, a Quaker graduate school. As well as stories and articles, he has published a book on wild food gathering, *Stalking the Wild Asparagus* (New York, 1962), and other nature books.

**Dorothy Emmet** was formerly Professor of Philosophy in the University of Manchester. Author of *The Nature of Metaphysical Thinking Function, Purpose and Powers* and *Rules, Roles and Relations*. Honorary Fellow of Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford, and Fellow of Lucy Cavendish College, Cambridge.

**Adrian Martin** belongs to the Society of the Sacred Mission, Kelham. He was a missionary priest in South Africa for twenty-two years, and was prior and director of St. Patrick's Priory. He identifies himself with Frances Banks in thinking that "study and pursuit of the inner life is the safest approach to understanding the afterlife".

**Michael Lamb** read Oriental Studies at Lincoln College, Oxford, and did two years research at the University of Tokyo. He is at present engaged in writing his D.Phil. thesis at Oxford on Japanese linguistics.

**Yorick Wilks** read Mathematics and Moral Sciences at Pembroke College, Cambridge. He does research in philosophy and the mechanical analysis of language. He has been a Labour Party agent and started a political magazine.

**Kathleen Oldfield** read History at Cambridge and now one of her chief interests is the history of religions. She is particularly concerned with the development of myths, and is trying to write something for the young on the Creation Myths of the World. Otherwise her occupations are chiefly domestic. She is married to Carolus Oldfield, who directs language research in an M.R.C. unit at Edinburgh University.

**Anthony Durham** read Natural Sciences at Clare College, Cambridge, and obtained a B.A. in 1967. He is at present working for a Ph.D. in molecular biology in Cambridge. He is chairman of the Cambridge Group for the Investigation of Unidentified Flying Objects (CUGIUFO) and has wide interests within the subject.

**Bernard Wignall** read Mathematics at Jesus College, Cambridge, and graduated this year. He has been interested in Unidentified Flying Objects for about two years and has worked on computer processing of UFO reports. He is acting editor of the UFO Research Bulletin and is working in the University Mathematical Laboratory, Cambridge.

**Michael Hare**, the writer of the letter on p. 87, American architect turned philosopher, was educated at Yale and Columbia. For many years he was consulting architect to the Association of College Unions. During World War II he served in the Pacific as an officer in the U.S. Marines. Subsequently his firm designed public buildings, including U.S. embassies. In 1955 he turned to problems in the philosophy of design, and then to the philosophy of science. He came to Cambridge this summer to collaborate in editing the report of the Colloquium on "The Quantum Theory and Beyond" and died suddenly on 30th August while on a boating holiday just as he was arriving at the home of his ancestors, Stow Bardolph in Norfolk. He was buried in the churchyard near the chapel which bears his family crest.



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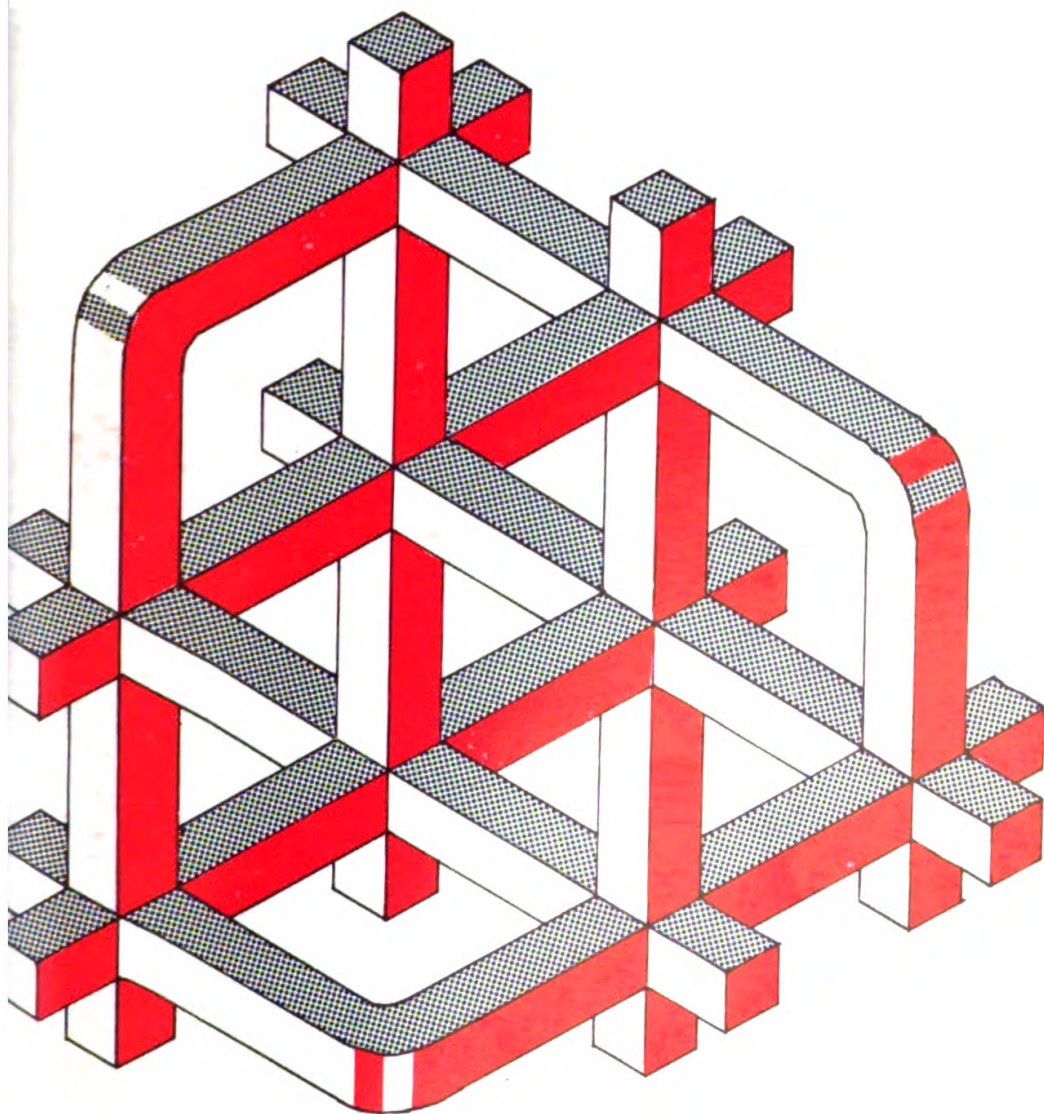
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# Theoria to Theory





# THEORIA TO THEORY

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# Editorial

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In our last editorial trying to define a religious group, we said, “A religious group originates when some sort of ‘primal vision’—which has to be at odds somehow with ‘the world’, i.e. with that aspect of society against which the group is reacting—begins to receive an institutional embodiment”. We gave as instances of such groups the Czechs in Prague and in Moscow, the McCarthyites at Chicago, and the scientologists.

This definition, as the examples show, has the advantage of being wide. It takes the notion of “religious group” out of its traditional theological context and tries to put it in a sociological one. But the definition has the correlated disadvantage of being vague. What is a “primal vision”? What was the “institutional embodiment” of, say, the Czech students in Prague?

Surely, the difficulty is that we really want to ask two questions simultaneously, and, as sociologists, don’t like to say so. “What is a religious group”? (on this see Dorothy Emmet’s serial), and “What should a religious group be”? (see, on this, the four-handed dialogue in this issue).

Each of these questions can be tackled (up to a point) separately; but any attempt to answer both simultaneously puts us on the horns of a dilemma. For it is no good, on the one hand, just looking sociologically at the neolithic churches (taking “neolithic” here in Teilhard de Chardin’s widened sense) if we wish to frame any ideal of what a religious group should be and how it should operate. For the very criteria of self-evaluation of the neolithic churches will itself be neolithic; we shall have to discard it. And indeed, as is known, contemporary humanists constantly assert that the corporate behaviour and rituals of the neolithic churches are junglebound; and it would be widely agreed that their reiterated attempts at official communication, in our time, have merely produced a credulity gap. On the other hand, if, in analysing religious groups, we talk only in terms of future ideals (which is what we already do when, judging from the evolutionary point of view, we call the existing ecclesiastical groups “neolithic”) we lose contact with sociology, and, therefore, also with fact, and with the possibility of precise description of fact. So we are in a dilemma. And it is the fact that we feel that we are in this dilemma which presupposes that we think that civilisation is swinging up from the neolithic, not down—as we said in our last editorial; Teilhard de Chardin has, of course, also said that, in the long run, it is swinging up. For always before, in attacking evils rampant in churches, reformers have cried out, “Yes, there are incarnate devils with us, and brazen criminals, many of



them in ecclesiastical high places; but there are also still, in forests and in hermitages and in other hidden places (and despised and rejected by the present corrupt ecclesiastical authorities) great saints". But now, enlightened (dubiously) by current schools of psychiatry, we feel increasing compassion for the so-called incarnate devils and the criminals; and increasing doubt about the sanctity of the saints. The neolithic landscape, seen from above, has flattened.

So, back to the beginning again. How can we think, in general philosophic terms, about religious groups? What terms can we use?

Let's plunge straight in, it is the only thing to do, and raise three topics:

- (a) the special nature of ecclesiastical authority within such a group,
- (b) face-to-face relations within such a group,
- (c) the training of recruits and neophytes within such a group.

Now, in effect this issue's Dialogue concerns itself with (b); and (c) is to be tackled in a forthcoming number. So, we will here tackle (a). What is religious authority?

First, is there anything that distinguishes religious authority, operating in a religious group, from secular authority operating in a secular group; especially from military authority and from administrative authority? And here—having just solemnly promised ourselves not to be neolithic in judging this matter—it would be impossible for anybody discussing it not to quote the acknowledged primary authority on the subject. "The Kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and those in authority over them are called benefactors. But not so with you; rather let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as one who serves." (St. Luke 22, 25-26, R.S.V.) This conception of spiritual authority is not specific to Christianity (the ancient Chinese emperor, for instance, who was also the nation's high priest, had to begin all his proclamations "I, the little child"). But it would probably not be doubted by comparative religionists that Christ stands out among religious leaders as having rammed this point home to his followers again and again; and, notoriously, he has almost never yet been listened to by any religious dignitary. For what is the characteristic of a servant, or of a junior? What distinguishes him from a master or a senior? It is not that he does or does not do any particular work but that he is deprived of the power of taking decisions, of assuming the initiative, of making choices; it never falls to him to make or break the enterprise. Now it is just this power of choice, particularly over ritual matters, which clerics of all religions and of all sorts, notoriously, will not hand over to those at the bottom of their own hierarchies. As men, they will not hand it over to women: as priests to the laity: as clerks, to the illiterate; as

“theologians” to those whom they consider to be “uninstructed”, or theologically blind. And, like all other human beings, the more scatty and incompetent they themselves are, the less they will delegate, much less hand over authority. They preach moreover, about the spiritual need for “becoming a little child”, but is never they who ought to become the little children, with their hearers, i.e. the members of the congregation, as the adults; it is the congregation who ought to become docile and like the children, while they, exempted from the necessity, remain as fathers.

So (if we take Jesus Christ’s distinguishing criterion of religious authority seriously, which the whole post-Christian world, in its heart, desires to do) the reason for our dilemma about it becomes obvious. If Christ’s distinguishing criterion is once abandoned, indeed there ceases to be any difference whatever between religious authority and, say, civil servant authority or trade unionist authority. If it is stuck to we can’t find any instances of anyone exercising true religious authority so, as a sociological phenomenon, it is not there for us to observe, or to discover. But is this so? Taking now the small groups, not the great corporations, and taking in together with the present situation the accounts given in the literature, are there *no* instances of Christio-authority-behaviour to be found within Christianity? Once we have to answer, we realise, yes, there are some: just a few. The behaviour of Victor Hugo’s Bishop to the thief who stole his silver candlesticks, of Christian martyrs to their executioners, of St. Francis of Sales, with his open study door, to the people who continually interrupted him . . . a list could be made. And, as soon as we meditate upon this list, our faces change; the anti-clericalism fades out of them; we relax; the world suddenly seems somehow better. So we formulate the hypothesis: *taking Jesus Christ’s criterion of spiritual authority as being secular authority in reverse seriously, observation of its effects, which are strong, shows that its attractive power is due to the unexpectedness of its humility.*

So much for its attractive power. What about its persuasive power?

At once we become able to formulate our second hypothesis: *The persuasive power of religious authority depends upon the religious teacher being able to share with his hearers the common conceptual background of an agreed and spiritual science (taking “science” here in its older, wider sense, which, however, includes modern science).*

According to the written accounts, this used to happen; normally in ancient India, where, as modern Hindus constantly point out, all the schools and sects, whatever their points of variance, shared the background of a common theory of religion; but also within early neo-Platonic Christianity. The Philokalia, for instance (still primary

source book of spirituality for Orthodox Christianity, claims to expound "The Art of Arts, and the Science of Sciences", and the very name "Philokalia" means "love of the perfect, and/or, of the beautiful". But now, this agreed background of a common science has completely gone, with the result that typically our contemporary ecclesiastical leaders either collapse or threaten, because they can no longer persuade. Putting it another way, as soon as those in religious authority have to assert such things as infallible dogmas or "the Church's age-old rules", the persuasive power of their religious authority has already been lost. Once the persuasive power has been lost, moreover, the Christic attraction vanishes: for, faced with the total failure of normal powers of persuasion, clerics (and their communist equivalent on the other side of the Iron Curtain) forget (if they ever knew it) their Christic commitment to reversal of secular authoritarian behaviour, and so we get explosion, prohibition, fabrication, evasion, withdrawal, excommunication (in the ecclesiastical groups) and torture, imprisonment, liquidation, and so on, in the Communistic groups, i.e. behaviour which is indistinguishable from ordinary more superficial secular authoritarian behaviour, except that it is usually very much worse.

There is another, third feature of religious authority which must also be considered, and that is, the detail of the kinds of acts which the few, rare, Christic characters who have ever been in positions of authority have actually performed. But this is so bound up with the whole question of the nature of spiritual training that it must be held over to be discussed in a future issue.

Meanwhile, in attempting to get a more general view of this matter, it must be clear by now that we, and all the rest of the world are like paranormal "sensitives" having "out-of-the-body experiences". We rise up above our own bodies, and above the current situation, in attempted insight, and repudiate all presently existent religious groups as "neolithic". Then we come back into our own bodies, and lo, we ourselves are still animals: though animals liable to occasional, and doubtfully veridical, out-of-the-body experiences.

It is not a comfortable, and not a safe situation for the world to be in.

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We wish to make clear that our Editor is not responsible for the actual presentation of the views in this editorial, as she is enjoying a well earned rest and respite from her colleagues in the relatively peaceful company of the wild animals of Africa.

\* \* \*

Thomas Merton's unexpected death in Bangkok, Thailand on Tuesday, 10th December 1968 occurred a few days before we went to press, and we print, in his memory, extracts from an article "A New Christian Consciousness" he had intended for us. Merton was one of the five founders of our recently formed American Society "Theoria Inc." It is remarkable that we should feel such grief for someone we have never met.

"It was assumed until quite recently that the experience of the first Christians was still accessible to fervent Christians of our day in all its purity, provided certain conditions were faithfully fulfilled. The consciousness of the modern Christian was essentially the same as that of the Christian of the Apostolic age, and differed only in certain accidentals of culture due to the expansion of the Church in time and space.

"Modern scholarship has thoroughly questioned this assumption. It has raised the problem of a radical discontinuity between the experience of the first Christians and that of later generations".

Merton says we should consider:

"the question of a radical shift in the Christian consciousness, and hence in the Christian's experience of himself in relation to Christ and to the Church. This question is being discussed from many viewpoints in Catholic circles after Vatican II. It is implicit in new explorations of the nature of faith, in new studies of ecclesiology and of Christology, in the new liturgy and everywhere. Conservative Catholics find this questioning of the accepted categories disturbing.

The metaphysical stability of this view which, over the centuries, became traditional, was comforting and secure. Moreover it was inseparable from a stable and authoritarian concept of hierarchical Church structure. A return to a more dynamic and charismatic Christianity—claimed to be that of the first Christians—characterized the Protestant attack on these ancient structures, which depended on a static and metaphysical outlook. More radical Catholics realize this today and perhaps take a certain pleasure in using a fluid, elusive terminology calculated to produce a maximum of anxiety and confusion in less adventurous minds. This dynamism questions all that is static and accepted, and it all makes for good newspaper copy, but the results are not always to be taken very seriously. However that may be, the whole question of Christian, especially Catholic, mysticism is affected by it. If mysticism is summarily identified with the 'Hellenic' and 'Medieval' Christian experience it is more and more rejected as non-Christian. The new, radical Catholicism tends to do this. The Christian is invited to repudiate all

aspiration to personal contemplative union with God and to deep mystical experience because this is an infidelity to the true Christian revelation, a human substitution for God's saving word, a pagan evasion, an individualistic escape from community. By this token also the Christian dialogue with Oriental religions, with Hinduism and especially with Zen, is considered rather suspect, though of course since dialogue is 'progressive' one must not attack it openly as such.

"It may however be pertinent to remark here that the term "ecumenism" is not held to be applicable to dialogue with non-Christians. There is an essential difference, say these progressive Catholics, between the dialogue of Catholics with other Christians and the dialogue of Catholics with Hindus or Buddhists. While it is assumed that Catholics and Protestants can learn from each other, and that they can progress together toward a new Christian self-understanding, many progressive Catholics would not concede this to dialogue with non-Christians. Once again, the assumption is that since Hinduism and Buddhism are 'metaphysical' and 'static' or even 'mystical' they have ceased to have any relevance in our time. Only the Catholics who are still convinced of the importance of Christian mysticism are also aware that much is to be learned from a study of the techniques and experience of Oriental religions. But these Catholics are regarded by men with suspicion, if not derision, both by progressives and conservatives alike.

"Is the long tradition of Christian mysticism, from the Post-Apostolic age, the Alexandrian and Cappadocian Fathers down to Eckhart, Tauler, the Spanish mystics and the modern mystics simply a deviation? When people who cannot entrust themselves to the Church as she now is, nevertheless look with interest and sympathy into the writings of the mystics: are they to be reprov'd by Christians and admonished to seek rather a more limited and more communal experience of fellowship with progressive believers on the latter's terms? Is this the only true way to understand Christian experience? Is there really a problem, and if there is, what precisely is it? Supposing that the only authentic Christian experience is that of the first Christians: can this be recovered and reconstructed in any way whatever? And if so, is it to be 'mystical' or 'prophetic'? And in any case, *what is it?* The present notes cannot hope to answer such questions. Their only purpose is to consider the conflict in Christian consciousness today and to make a guess or two that might point toward avenues of further exploration.

"First of all, the 'Christian consciousness' of modern man can never purely and simply be the consciousness of a first century

inhabitant of the Roman Empire. It is bound to be a modern consciousness.

“In our evaluation of the modern consciousness, we have to take into account the still overwhelming importance of the Cartesian *Cogito*. Modern man, in so far as he is still Cartesian (he is of course going far beyond Descartes in many respects) is a subject for whom his own self-awareness as a thinking, observing, measuring and estimating ‘self’ is absolutely primary. It is for him the one indubitable ‘reality’ and all truth starts here. The more he is able to develop his consciousness as a subject over against objects, the more he can understand things in their relations to him and one another, and the more he can manipulate these objects for his own interests. But also, at the same time, the more he tends to isolate himself in his own subjective prison, to become a detached observer cut off from everything else in a kind of impenetrable alienated and transparent bubble which contains all reality in the form of purely subjective experience. Modern consciousness then tends to create this isolated bubble of awareness: an ego self imprisoned in its own consciousness, isolated and out of touch with other such selves in so far as they are all ‘things’ rather than persons. It is this kind of consciousness, exacerbated to an extreme, which has made inevitable the so called ‘death of God’. Cartesian thought began with an attempt to reach God as object by starting from the thinking self. But when God becomes object, he sooner or later ‘dies’ because God as object is ultimately unthinkable. God as object is not only a mere abstract concept, but one which contains so many internal contradictions that it becomes entirely non-negotiable except when it is hardened into an idol that is maintained in existence by a sheer act of will. For a long time man continued to be capable of this wilfulness: but now the effort has become exhausting and many Christians have realized it to be futile. Relaxing the effort, they have let go the ‘God-object’ which their fathers and grandfathers still hoped to manipulate for their own ends. Their weariness has accounted for the element of resentment which made this a conscious ‘murder’ of the deity. Liberated from the strain of wilfully maintaining an object-God in existence, the Cartesian consciousness remains none the less imprisoned in itself. Hence the need to break out of itself and to meet ‘the other’ in ‘encounter’, ‘openness’, ‘fellowship’, ‘communion’.

“Meanwhile drugs have appeared as a *Deus ex machina* to enable the self-aware Cartesian consciousness to extend its awareness of itself while seemingly getting out of itself. In other words, drugs have provided the self-conscious self with a substitute for

**metaphysical and mystical self-transcendence. Perhaps also with a substitute for love? I don't know.**

**“There must be a better reply to the Cartesians than the mere reaffirmation of the ancient static and classic positions. It is quite possible that the language and metaphysical assumptions of the classic view are out of reach of many modern men. It is quite plausible to assert that the old Hellenic categories are indeed worn out, and that Platonising thought, even revived with shots in the arm from Yoga and Zen, will not quite serve in the modern world. What then? Is there some new possibility, some other opening for the Christian consciousness today?”**

# Dialogue between Emily, Robert, Matthew and Richard: Empirical Tests of a Church\*

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*(Sister Emily C.E., sometime Novice Mistress of the Community of the Epiphany; Dr. Robert Thouless, Emeritus Reader in Educational Psychology in the University of Cambridge; Father Matthew Shaw S.S.M., Prior of St. Paul's Priory Quernmore, Lancaster; Prof. R. B. Braithwaite, Emeritus Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Cambridge).*

*The problem which these philosophers have set themselves to discuss is that of finding a suitable empirical method of answering the question: "What is a Church". Many answers to this question have been given in the past; but most of them are such as a scientist, qua scientist, is bound to find unacceptable. The Epiphany Philosophers, in this discussion, are trying to open up a method of enquiry which is one to which science is neither irrelevant nor hostile.*

*The person for whom such a discussion as this is primarily intended is the scientist, who, without ceasing to be interested in his own scientific vocation, comes to feel that there may well be some very valuable truth behind Christian living.*

**MATTHEW:** What I am quite clear about is that there *are* people like this—of course I know there are scientists who don't find any incompatibility between being a scientist and being a Christian; but there are plenty of others, people who have been trained and brought up in the scientific tradition, without taking any serious notice of traditional Christianity, who do come to feel that there may well be something important in Christian living. What they tend to say is "You know, there might be quite a lot in Christianity, if one could take it seriously".

**RICHARD:** Yes, that is just what a scientist would say. And one can't blame the scientist for saying this kind of thing. At present it's difficult for a man brought up on and believing in scientific method to take Christianity seriously.

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\* A discussion originally broadcast in the Third Programme of the B.B.C., and reproduced by permission of the B.B.C. and of the participants (the Community of the Epiphany granting permission for the contribution of Sister Emily, who has since died). The producer, who made the opening announcement, was T. S. Gregory.



**ROBERT:** That may be true; it doesn't seem so for me. But suppose it is, where do you think we ought to begin to try to find an approach to Christianity such that a scientist will feel himself able to take it seriously?

**RICHARD:** Let's look at the thing from the scientist's point of view. It doesn't matter, in this connexion, what sort of a scientist he is—whether for instance he's a physicist or a zoologist or an anthropologist. All that's essential is that he should know what in general scientific method is and should be able to distinguish enquiries in which it's being applied from other, non-scientific, enquiries. In investigating Christianity he can start I suppose either by examining Christian systems of belief or by observing and thinking about Christian ways of living.

**ROBERT:** I think perhaps that it is the philosopher who will want to start by studying religious beliefs. The scientist will be more inclined to look at religious behaviour.

**MATTHEW:** The question is, where will the scientist start? Where will he go to study religious behaviour? and when he gets there what kind of questions will he want to ask about it?

**ROBERT:** I feel we're in danger of talking frightfully in the air. We haven't talked yet about any investigation any scientist has ever done in this field.

**RICHARD:** Right. Can you tell us what investigations scientists have done? The ones I know of don't seem to come to very much.

**ROBERT:** No, they don't come to very much. The only enquiry which scientists have made which is relevant here is the rather futile type of investigation called "The psychology of religion".

**RICHARD:** Why do you call this futile?

**ROBERT:** I did some work on it myself at one time; and it didn't seem to lead anywhere. It seemed to be discussing only trivial and superficial questions connected with religion and leaving out all the more important questions. The psychologist of religion for example, asks every conceivable question about a religious mystic, except whether he is in contact with God.

**RICHARD:** But that, alas, is high metaphysics; which is exactly what we've agreed not to discuss. Let's get back to something more down to earth—the Church for example. After all, the Church is the observable and public Christian phenomenon which ought to be able to be investigated by public scientific procedures—much more easily, in fact, than the mystic's private experiences.

**MATTHEW:** Yes, but look here. It's exactly phrases like "the Church" which cloud the issue. The Church with a big C is a sort of metaphysical entity, which is commonly defined as the Mystical body

of Christ. I'm not at all prepared to discard that definition; but I don't think it defines an "observable and public phenomenon"—indeed, quite the reverse.

EMILY: That's just the point. Does the Church exist? Not that I myself doubt its existence; but I know that this is one of the questions that bothers people.

MATTHEW: Yes. But I think it is a question that bothers people in two different ways. There is first the trouble about how anything understood in the way you and I understand "the Church" can be said to exist at all; and then there is the difficulty that this term "the Church" seems to be used in different senses by different people—indeed, by the *same* people. It is as though Christians were being deliberately vague about the meaning they attach to it. Now I don't myself think that the first trouble is one that concerns us in this discussion; but I imagine that if we are going to talk about "the Church" at all, we must try to find some common core of meaning in the various ways in which it is used. And frankly, I don't see much hope of doing that.

RICHARD: I doubt if it's as bad as that. If you'll tell us some of the ways in which the concept of the Church is used, we can see if they are in fact as heterogeneous as you say.

MATTHEW: All right. Well, first there's the distinction between meaning by "the Church" something which is intrinsically unobservable and using that term to refer to a religious organization. Secondly, there is the difficulty that remains, even if we restrict ourselves to meaning by the term nothing more than a religious organization, of deciding *what* organization; and this involves us in discriminating between conflicting accounts of what constitutes membership of this organization. You have, for example the Roman Catholic type of definition of the Church; "the Church is the spiritual organisation which is in communion with the see of Peter, that is, whose chief, the Pope, is Bishop of Rome". Then there is what you might call the Episcopal type of definition. "All religious organisations which have a historic episcopate are true branches of the Church". Then we come to what you might call the Free Church type of definition: "All these, together with the various Christian Protestant bodies, all count as members of the world-wide Church". This last definition would seem at first sight the most plausible, were it not that all attempts on this basis to make lists of types of Churches always get involved in the problem of borderline cases, such as "Shall the Unitarians count as a part of the Church"? and in the attempt to avoid making invidious distinctions—which to the non-Christian appear either uncharitable or laughable or both—theologians tend to take refuge again in the Church

mystical; and so the problem comes round again to that of defining a metaphysical entity and we are back where we started.

**RICHARD:** All this isn't of much use to the scientist. If we want to describe Christian ways of living scientifically, it looks as if we had better make a fresh start.

**ROBERT:** I am a scientist, of a sort, and what I want to ask is—what is an acceptable, empirical conception of a Church? Can't we drop the old ways of talking and tackle this problem from a new angle?

**MATTHEW:** Yes, I think we can; in fact I think we must. But if we do we must be clear that we have to cease talking about "the Church" and start instead talking about "a church" that is about an actual group of people.

**ROBERT:** I don't know whether it is worth saying, but as a matter of actual social anthropological technique there are two ways, not one, in which it would be legitimate to start to investigate in a case of this kind. The Anthropologist or the social psychologist for that matter could either start by observing the behaviour of the members of the group for a considerable time without trying to ask them any questions about their way of life. Or he could question a senior member of the group, say the chief, and ask this senior member what were the essentials of the group's structure and custom as opposed to the accidentals; or of course, he could combine the two methods.

**MATTHEW:** In this case we're considering which would be the better method with which to start?

**ROBERT:** I think there is everything to be said for starting with the method of questioning a senior member, especially as we are not here confronted with the difficulty of having to learn a new language in order to converse with him.

**RICHARD:** There's an extra reason today for starting with the second method. We've got with us one of those senior members—a senior member of a permanent religious group. Moreover she knows something of the terminology and methods of anthropology and group psychology.

**EMILY:** I must say I don't feel at all sure that I qualify as the kind of person you are looking for. But I will do my best if you will tell me what you want.

**ROBERT:** We want you to describe the essential observable features of a Church. That is, of a typical western European religious group.

**EMILY:** Well, if that's what you want, I'm not a scientist, and I shan't be able to explain it in scientific words—but I think perhaps I have got something to say: provided I can take such an organization as the Mother House of a religious community as an example of a religious group or Church.

**ROBERT:** You've had a kind of experience, in training people in religious groups, that none of the rest of us has had. We shall be glad to have your facts expressed in your own language. We can translate afterwards any of your terms which we may think need translating.

**RICHARD:** No-one ought to be so intolerant as to say that a term in any particular terminology is untranslatable or meaningless, until he has first heard it used.

**EMILY:** You want my conception of a Church? My conception of a Church is that it is a fellowship, the members of which are joined to each other by charity. Of course, I myself don't think that this charity is a matter purely of the individuals' relations to one another. I think there's more to it than that. I think that the charity dwelling in them is the Divine Charity or, in other words, the Holy Spirit.

**MATTHEW:** Yes, but need we at this moment talk about the Holy Spirit? This is a concept which, in view of our present purposes, raises the same kind of difficulties as concepts like "the Church", which we have just agreed not to use. Can't we give a complete account of this fellowship which you feel is the determining mark of such a group in terms of the relations of the individuals to one another?

**EMILY:** I don't think you can do that. I think you'll find that we have to talk about the Holy Spirit in the end.

**RICHARD:** Possibly. But can't we at any rate see how complete an account we can give of this fellowship without bringing in concepts not describable in terms of human behaviour?

**MATTHEW:** There's another point. I do think it is important here to distinguish a conception from a description. What we must ask you for is not so much to give your conception of a Church as to give a description of the particular kind of group or fellowship of which you know most.

**ROBERT:** What is essential in this fellowship, for instance? Can you say what are the chief behavioural signs of this fellowship?

**EMILY:** The capacity to take rational decisions.

**RICHARD:** Why do you say that? I would have thought that you would have started talking about "loving one another", or some such thing in that context.

**ROBERT:** This is a very interesting idea, though.

**MATTHEW:** Yes, it is the capacity to make rational decisions that lies at the heart of any good community. But I doubt whether most people would expect you to say anything like that, especially as a great many people think that religious communities are the very places where responsible decisions are all left to the superior.

**RICHARD:** Yours is a different line from St. Paul's list of criteria: love, joy, peace, and so on. Why do you think the ability to take

responsible decisions is such an essential mark of the existence of a church?

**EMILY:** Well, one characteristic of the kind of group I'm thinking about is that the people in it are committed to living together at extremely close quarters, and whenever people live together like this, every decision affects the whole group. Moreover, when decisions have to be made those who disagree cannot avoid one another. In other societies people can resign or dissociate themselves in some way or other from the decision, but in a Religious Community this way out is not available and so a special method of taking decisions has been found necessary and is still used although it dates from the earliest times.

**MATTHEW:** Does this method of coming to decisions really mark the difference between the religious group you are describing and the more familiar group—the parish congregation? Of course, I quite see that you are talking about a more closely-knit community than the normal parish.

**RICHARD:** Surely, we'd better not talk about parishes at this point. That will raise all sorts of irrelevant controversies. Anyhow do parishes form groups in any important sense of this word?

**ROBERT:** Why not talk about parishes? After all a parish group is almost certainly what a social anthropologist observing religious behaviour would take as being typical of a Church.

**RICHARD:** I think that we're bound only to confuse ourselves if we talk about groups (or so-called groups) centering on parishes. What we are trying to do [in this inquiry], is to separate the essential from the accidental. Whatever the essential criteria for the existence of a Church may turn out to be, I'm pretty certain that facts about a normal parish as it is at present will throw very little light upon them.

**MATTHEW:** Yes, but can't we imagine an ideal parish with features which are independent of a complicated history.

**ROBERT:** Well, I think it's up to you to say what it would be like.

**MATTHEW:** I cannot see that there need be any difference between a religious community and the more natural kind of group which consists of a collection of families, which is such as to prevent the second group having all the procedures characteristic of charity which are found in the first.

**ROBERT:** All this is doubtless very important for a discussion of how the present parish system can be improved. But it would greatly complicate our enquiry. Let us, for the moment at least, confine ourselves to the religious community taking a responsible decision. Could you tell us a little more about how they do it?

**EMILY:** This starts, as I have said, from the fact of living together in

close companionship. On some matters requiring decision the community is often at the beginning sharply divided. In all such disputed questions the whole community takes part in free discussion after prayer for the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The discussion is completely free as St. Benedict says "all should be called to council for it is often to the youngest that the Lord reveals what is best". There may be no vote taken since the matter under consideration may be decided by the attainment of a common mind, reached through patient discussion, which the community regards as guided by the Holy Spirit. That complete unity of spirit in charity can exist in a religious community in which freedom of opinion in discussion is encouraged is something to which I can testify from a lifetime of experience.

**RICHARD:** That's all very well, but I don't quite see how this procedure you've expounded differs from that practised in making decisions in a group which is not specifically a religious group. There you similarly have practices worked out by trial and error for discussion and deliberation, both corporate and in private; procedures such as adjourning the meeting and agreeing to sleep on the matter before coming to a decision. The object of all these methods is to ensure that the decisions arrived at are not merely majority decisions but decisions in which the minority, even though they may not agree with the decision, feel that they have been properly consulted and therefore can accept the decision with a good heart.

**EMILY:** The way this question is put makes it a very difficult one to answer. You see in the sort of secular group which has just been described there is often real charity; there's no doubt about that, and yet there is a difference.

**MATTHEW:** What do you mean here by charity?

**EMILY:** I mean here that if you took a slice of time, say, the decisive two hours covering the moment of coming to a decision in a religious community and then took the decisive two hours covering the moment of coming to a decision in a good secular group, you might not find any significant differences of behaviour or practice between the two. But if you took a much longer stretch of time, say, a week or a month, from the lives of the two groups, I think you would find considerable differences of behaviour; and might find ways of testing differences in depth of charity.

**MATTHEW:** Exactly what differences have you in mind?

**ROBERT:** You see, the kind of thing that, let us say, an anthropologist would want to know would be what happens at all times during the day; what a concealed observer would put down in his notebook if he were making a report for a scientific society on the life and customs of religious communities. He would make this record

because he wanted to explain what sort of differences there were between the life of religious communities and the life of other kinds of groups. How, for instance, do you begin the day?

EMILY: I think the only way to answer this question is to take something which, for the minute, we must assume, begging a lot of questions, to be a typical community. At an early hour the rising bell summons the members of the Community to Chapel for another Office and a long, quiet time for meditation. After this the real work of the day begins, but throughout the day there are alternations of work and prayer, or worship. Of course the order in which the activities are taken varies in different communities.

ROBERT: What kind of activity is this worship?

EMILY: It takes two forms, which are inter-related. Seven times a day a community recites the divine office, the Opus Dei, which consists of psalms, hymns and prayers, the latter partly in dialogue form. Also there is the daily celebration of the Holy Eucharist, which is the centre of the community's corporate worship.

ROBERT: What sort of thing happens between the period of worship and during the rest of the day? Is it all work or are there periods of relaxation? Is it all silence, or are there periods of talking?

EMILY: This varies considerably in different communities. But in all there will be periods for work, such as teaching, nursing, housework, gardening, studying; there would also be, in most communities, a period for relaxation and talking. A certain part of each day is spent in silence, but the actual time varies according to the kind of life the community leads.

ROBERT: I think that what you say suggests that the decision procedure of the community doesn't depend only on what happens at the chapter meetings where the decisions take place.

MATTHEW: Yes, but does any significant difference in decision-making depend upon the kind of activities you have just described? Could a secular society meet for a week, say, or a month, and do all these things (except possibly celebrate the Eucharist) in just the same way and still there be a qualitative difference between it and the religious group?

ROBERT: I suppose we should have to describe this difference as a difference in the purpose behind these activities. They are not carried out as a means of getting unanimity in the group, but for what the members call "the Glory of God".

RICHARD: Come, come. I thought we were primarily discussing procedures for arriving at right decisions. Of course we haven't yet properly considered what we are meaning by right decisions in this context. We are not really interested as to whether the decisions are

those which are right in the sense of having the best consequences: what we are interested in is the method for arriving at decisions which embody the common opinion of the group, and which do not leave some members feeling frustrated. I quite see that a procedure of living and worshipping in common may be effective in enabling a genuinely common mind to be produced. But this will depend upon the common ways of living you have described influencing the attitudes the members have to one another, and the weights they are willing to give to others' views. I wonder if these things can be effective without something further.

**ROBERT:** As, for example, what the community does about the occasions of offence of its members towards one another. I seem to remember that the rule of St. Benedict required public confession of such offences in the chapter house, with such measures taken as would lead to mutual reconciliation and forgiveness between the members. There is a real danger of enforced contiguity making the members of a group hate each other; and some technique of reconciliation is necessary to enable them to keep on loving each other. The thing will go the one way or the other, and there has got to be a method of ensuring that it goes the right way.

**RICHARD:** But surely you're not going to say that all groups which have not got these particular Benedictine techniques live in mutual hatred? Other methods have been worked out in civilized communities. For example, laughing good-humouredly at one's own and other people's foibles.

**ROBERT:** Yes, of course there are other techniques. You have mentioned the technique called by anthropologists "joking behaviour": that has its own value and importance. Probably it mitigates hatred without doing much towards promoting love. Religious communities have adopted a different technique which may be a better one.

**RICHARD:** The Benedictine method would seem on the face of it to be the more direct one.

**EMILY:** Most communities, following the Benedictine plan, have retained some form of reconciliation procedure, as I am sure a psychologist would want to call it. This consists in a weekly or daily meeting at which breaches of rule and breaches of charity are acknowledged and apologies offered. A technical distinction is made between breaches of rule and breaches of charity, but it usually happens that a breach of rule has involved some degree of uncharity either towards the whole community or towards some member of it, or towards someone outside.

**RICHARD:** Then I suppose you would say that this reconciliation-procedure is relevant to the decision-procedure in that it



diminishes suspicion and removes latent ill-will, which both tend to prevent people coming to a common mind.

**EMILY:** Yes, for the simple reason that in course of time those concerned grow to know each other's minds and hearts and ways of behaviour and actually this technique for reconciliation does have the effect of healing resentment and other hurts which may have been given even by people who were not intending to give offence.

I think, however, that in addition to what's been said so far there is something I might add in defence of my contention that decision-procedure in a good religious group tends to be of higher quality than decision procedure elsewhere. I think I can best explain myself by saying that, if I am right, it follows that the fundamental role in a religious group is that of a "Rational Decider"; and that this role must be taught; it is not innate.

**ROBERT:** It's an unusual idea to regard the power of rational decision as being a product of training. It may very well be true, but if it is true I think a lot of us would like to know how this power of rational decision can be learned.

**EMILY:** I think this role of Rational Decider is not innate. And the way I should put it is by saying that it is a manifestation of grace; but that it needs right training to allow this grace to grow. For example, the training of novices in almost any religious community partly consists in their learning to perform in public physical acts which require exactness and initiative and self-control and on which the smooth running of a whole ceremony, for instance, depends. I rather think, especially in the case of those who tend to shirk responsibility, that this does help them to be responsible and rational beings at a later stage. I cannot prove what I say. I cannot even at present imagine what kind of tests would help to prove it. But I do feel that in developing the power of making rational decisions the secular groups often leave out the training of the body while religious communities do not.

**ROBERT:** Can you give some examples of the kind of physical acts you mean?

**EMILY:** Well, a novice is taught, amongst other things, such actions as ringing the bell which calls the community to office or to any form of meeting. She is also taught to prepare the altar and light the candles for services; and to rise early in order to open the chapel and put all in order. This requires great exactness in detail and is really a very responsible job. And then there is wearing of the religious habit in public, with all it does to help form habits and so develop character.

**RICHARD:** How exactly do these things increase rationality?

**EMILY:** I think it possible that it's not due to their direct effect on rationality so much as to their removal of the primitive fear of being

conspicuous. The novices in course of time lose the fear of facing the consequences of their actions: they speak up and say what they think.

**MATTHEW:** Do you mean that they get to know what they think, as well as having the courage to speak up?

**EMILY:** Yes, I think that even when people seem incapable of rational decision the power is really there, only through some kind of fear they seem more indecisive and incapable of initiative than they really are.

**MATTHEW:** And you would maintain, would you, that at this point too, training can bring out a quality which is not brought out in most people in the world outside?

**EMILY:** Yes, I think this Christian role of Rational Decider is not quite the same as any role of taking responsibility which is filled in the outside world. The point I wish to stress is that in the ordinary world those lead and decide who are naturally able to lead and decide. Whereas, in a good community, every single member, no matter what her natural character, race, background, education, has to learn to fulfil this role of being a decider. You see, the truth about this matter is just the opposite of what opponents of the religious life believe it to be. In a religious community, although on the one hand, there is discipline and obedience, which make people learn to be co-operative and adaptable, yet on the other hand, there is complete and equally shared responsibility.

**ROBERT:** But aren't there differences of status in religious communities?

**EMILY:** No, not really differences of status, only differences of role. That is the whole point. There are no slaves, all are brothers; in fact, one can go further and say that slave status, or even slave mentality, is fatal to the procedure of rational decision. There may be, and is, variety of roles in different employments; but all are equally valued because they have all the same status. And this status is a unique status; one which they have both in their own eyes and in the eyes of each other.

**MATTHEW:** And it is—

**EMILY:** That of "heirs of God, joint heirs with Christ", and "inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven".

**ROBERT:** Yes.

**RICHARD:** Ye-es. But doesn't the Kingdom of Heaven include others outside religious communities? How does all this that has been said fit in with them?

**MATTHEW:** Well, of course, I don't think the religious communities regard their own way of procedure and training as something unrelated to what goes on in the life of the world outside. Rather, they would maintain that their own special circumstances enable them to do with

more facility what all Christians can and ought to do.

**RICHARD:** I suppose that those features in the life of religious communities which we've discussed are exactly those which are most applicable to groups outside such communities. Indeed, my difficulty has always been to see how these decision-procedures and reconciliation-procedures were distinguishable from those used in secular life. You've made out quite a case, though, for supposing there is an important difference in their reconciliation-procedures. But would you wish to make such a difference in reconciliation-procedure the sole empirical criterion for the existence of a Church? I thought you psychologists would prefer to give as criteria such things as prayer and common worship.

**ROBERT:** Yes, of course, that is just what I was going to say. I was going to add as the next criterion of the existence of a Church, the practice of prayer and worship.

**RICHARD:** The difficulty about prayer and worship as criteria is that they cannot be described so easily in behaviour terms.

**ROBERT:** I should have thought they could. It seems to me quite obvious that a psychologist merely observing their behaviour could tell whether a group was worshipping just as well as he could tell whether they were, say, playing games or doing mathematical calculations. There are various behavioural characteristics of worship. Some people kneel down and fold their hands. Some stand rigid with the palms of their hands upwards. Sometimes they sing. Sometimes they remain silent. Sometimes they dance.

We don't, in fact, have any difficulty in saying, on behavioural grounds, that a given group is engaged in worship even though we might sometimes make a mistake in judgment about it. They might be pretending to worship, or rehearsing for worship; just as a man might be writing figures on a piece of paper and not really calculating. But we should not therefore say that we are not able to describe the act of calculating in behavioural terms but that our judgments about it may sometimes be mistaken.

**RICHARD:** Yes, I quite agree that there are quite a lot of behavioural signs of worship, but most people would hold that these are not the essentials.

**ROBERT:** What are the essentials?

**RICHARD:** It's quite easy to state what the essentials are not. It's a good deal more difficult to state what they are—in empirical terms.

**MATTHEW:** What do you mean in this context by saying "in empirical terms"?

**RICHARD:** In terms of things which can be described by observation, or which can be put forward as concepts in scientific

hypotheses to explain observations.

**MATTHEW:** Well, I don't know whether I can quite do that. But I do want to say something which I think might be relevant. In public worship it seems to me what we are trying to do is to direct our attention in a way in which we wish it were directed all the time. You see someone teaching worship might say something like this: "Acts of adoration are lessons in reverence; acts of thanksgiving are lessons in gratitude; acts of contrition are lessons in humility; acts of intercession are lessons in charity". Such habits of mind, all of them, to some extent, produce observable effects—observable at least over a long period. My trouble is, that, although this sort of answer may satisfy the empiricist, to give the impression that getting these habits of mind is the primary reason for worship is not enough.

**ROBERT:** Even granted that these habits of mind are desirable, which some people dispute—

**MATTHEW:** In discussing worship all you talk about empirically is what you get, but from the religious point of view the essential in worship is what you give.

**EMILY:** Yes, and here may I say something. What the worshipper gives is the whole self. And because the whole self is given—and this learning to give oneself is a process which must be thought of as taking the whole of one's life to achieve—various good effects flow in which are much deeper than any of those which have been mentioned so far. For instance, a deep serenity will take the place of the restlessness which is observable in so many people. A large hearted generosity will take the place of self-seeking.

Hopefulness will take the place of so much that is despairing. Stability will take the place of that unhappy feeling of not having roots. Integrity will take the place of deceit and blindness. Joy will take the place of dullness and listlessness, and that fundamental charity which everyone would like to have, will knock out all the violent but even more the miserable forms of hatred, which make life so intolerable.

**ROBERT:** I think you've made clear to us all that the giving side of worship is an essential part of it and it has observable effects.

**RICHARD:** The question now becomes that of whether the thing itself as opposed to its effects can be described empirically.

## Review Discussion

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### **The Parable of the Beast\***

*I William Thorpe*

The title of this book, though arresting, is not very illuminating. The author's apparent object is to relate man as a living organism and as a reasoning being to his total environment. The author argues that man has allowed his intellect to insulate him from his surroundings to the point at which he cannot clearly see and understand his intimate dependence at all levels and in all respects upon his mundane and cosmic environment. The result is, so the author concludes, that man is aware neither of the limitations imposed by his physical environment and still less aware of the unexplored potentialities of his body as the vehicle and servant of his mind and spirit. He prefaces his book by two quotations which perhaps express its general orientation and outlook better than anything he actually says himself in his introduction. The first of these is from Marcus Aurelius: "To the rational animal, the same act is according to nature and according to reason", and the second is from Spinoza: "For nobody has known as yet the frame of the body so thoroughly as to explain all of its operations". Bleibtreu considers that the vain arrogance of scientists over past decades has given people a great, but false faith in the ability of science to comprehend the mysteries—particularly the mysteries within a structured metaphysical or religious system of thought. Thus, science has resulted in a loss of faith in the old mythologies; but yet without a mythology we must deny mystery—and with this denial we can live only at a great cost to ourselves. He goes on to say "It seems to me that we are in the process of creating a mythology out of the raw materials of science in much the same way that the Greeks and Jews created their mythologies out of the raw materials of history". He adds "I feel strongly that this is not only a legitimate, but a necessary process".

The book deals with a wide, but rather puzzlingly chosen, selection of topics. It is divided into three sections: the first entitled *The Individual*, which includes in its contents, a very vivid and readable account of the present views of biologists on the pineal gland and its functions, and which finally ends with a somewhat speculative account of the molecular encoding of memory. Part Two, *The Population*, deals with population problems and covers the species' problem and the problem of "compatibility". This section is odd in content and often

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\* *The Parable of the Beast*, by John Bleibtreu. London, Victor Gollanz, 1968. 45s.

obscure in intent. Section Two of the book concludes with a discussion of space, with special reference to territory and home range. Part Three is entitled *Social Organisation* and includes sociality and aggression.

Every one of the odd collection of topics which Bleibtreu chooses, he makes dramatic and fascinatingly readable. In regard to the last topic, namely aggression, he is enthusiastic but at the same time properly critical about Konrad Lorenz, and tempers Lorenz's views by a penetrating account of the work of the American Zoologist W. C. Allee, which saw the light in the 1930's and which is a sound corrective to some of the wilder theorizings of present-day students of animal behaviour.

Bleibtreu's thoroughness and industry in penetrating to the fundamentals of each topic he chooses, is very praiseworthy and, in an amateur who is a newcomer to the biological field, quite remarkable. Even the widely-read professional biologist will find himself coming up against unfamiliar facts and refreshingly new aspects of old problems. As an example of this one may refer to the discussion of the relations between the physiology of the pineal gland and the Hindu system of Kundalini Yoga of the sixteenth century. Though biologists will find the book as a whole very readable, and some parts of considerable originality, they will equally be irritated at times by some mis-reading and misunderstanding of authorities, (very evident in his dealings with "compatibility"), and much dramatisation of personal relations between researchers—relations which may never have existed except in the author's imagination. This is particularly obvious in his account of work on the Honey Bee and in his assessment of the studies of Ribbands, Butler and others. Nevertheless, the book can be recommended as one likely to stimulate many to take biology more seriously and to read on biological topics with greater interest and understanding. It might indeed well turn many young people towards a biological career; and I mean to a real biological career, the true study of living organisms and their inter-relations—not just the study of macromolecules! It should have a salutary effect in giving the general reader a realisation of the vast possibilities yet open to man to organise his life on this earth in a far more humane and forward-looking manner than is at present apparent. In fact, Bleibtreu's vision is one of reasoned optimism—and that is surely one of the commodities most needed today.

## *II Martin Richards*

John Bleibtreu is an imaginative and gifted writer of popular science.

His subject, and the sub title of the book, are “the frontiers of biological knowledge”. This is the first and last cliché that he gives us (or maybe it’s the publisher’s) but it is an unfortunate one, as it will put off many potential readers. One expects to find a rehash of the DNA story, garnished perhaps with some half truths from ethology; instead we have a book which is an addition to the literature of biology itself, as well as being excellent pop science.

Bleibtreu argues that as we gain greater control over our environment so we become less happy with ourselves and our lives. Our unhappiness stems from the denial of our own biology so we need to create a mythology from our knowledge of science, particularly the biological sciences, in order to rectify this. He sees the main obstacle to building this mythology, and to progress in biology itself, as the mechanical quality and narrowness of our causal explanations. As a biologist working on problems of behaviour, I accept and applaud this diagnosis. The behavioural sciences are founded on single factor analyses of highly complex behaviour. We ascribe delinquency to broken homes, forgetting the myriad of events in a child’s life that may contribute to his antisocial behaviour. We have attempted to explain all of human learning with theories as over simple as Watsonian behaviourism. There is a small, but growing, tendency to look beyond the Skinner box and the Y maze and to set the behaviour we study in the wider context of our subject’s life and world. This is part of the ethologist’s message and such thinking is becoming increasingly influential in the behavioural sciences.

The parables of this book are drawn widely, from slime moulds’ aggregations to the dances of the honey bee; from Lorenz’s grey lag geese to the bacteria of the molecular biologists. The author disarms critics by saying that many professional biologists would regard some of his conclusions “with a cold eye” and that “the purpose of a parable is to expand the imagination, not to contract it”. Many would object to some of the conclusions, though not always with justification. However, there are occasions for what I would feel is just criticism and this is not simply the result of my narrow upbringing, full of causal and mechanistic explanations; Bleibtreu is sometimes misleading and the facts do not always support him. He states that there is considerable evidence that “behavioural characters are not carried on chromosomal genes”, but we are not really told what the evidence is. He implies that cytoplasmic inheritance is widespread; his evidence comes from two sets of studies both of unicellular or acellular organisms. Cytoplasmic inheritance is the suggested mode of transfer of individual experience to future generations. There is virtually no evidence for this and the assumption is unnecessary. Before leaving current dogma one must

consider cultural transmission rather more carefully. For example, one can handle infant rats in such a way that, when they mature, they will behave differently with their own young. Their young, in turn will carry the new 'culture' onto the next generation. All one needs to explain this process is that animals will 'remember' some of their infantile experiences and these 'memories'" will give rise to changed adult behaviour.

Much is made of the difference in the mode of inheritance of structural characteristics and behavioural traits. Bleibtreu says that it is "very difficult to locate precisely the site of those genes which control behavioural traits". This is the psychologist's problem not the geneticist's. The difficulty arises from the lack of effective ways for quantifying behaviour; without these one cannot expect simple answers from a genetic analysis. (Compare the difficulty of quantifying eye colour and human creativity.)

However, it would be churlish to be over critical. Popularisation of science is always something of a compromise and this is a pretty good one. By and large it is accurate, clear and very well written.

Many of the ideas in this book have a strange familiarity for me. This does not come from conversations in senior common rooms or over coffee mugs in any laboratory or from the scientific literature. Rather it stems from some fleeting contacts with the world of the hippies. In their often inarticulate way they would say that they knew it all (and had sassed it out for themselves). They understand the concept of Karma; the idea of causal networks stretching in all directions, in space and time. When our mechanistic society tries to keep them on a one track linear time scale, they thwart it by getting stoned. Hippies want to break out of our world of sterile unbiology so they confront bayonets with flowers (at the Pentagon) and run a pig for President. The seasons still have meaning for them, so they groove in the sun and feel the good vibrations in a park in Los Angeles to celebrate the autumnal equinox. We advance lighting up time by a few minutes. So Bleibtreu, the hippies and a few biologists have got the message. It is only they who are able to build our new mythology and I don't think they are going to get very much help from the current rival ones. I wish them well.

### *III Tom Heron*

I was attracted to this book by its title, and I was persuaded to read it when on glancing through the author's short introduction I came across the phrase "The facts they (the scientists) report can only be



understood as parables". I immediately asked myself why I had not thought of that phrase myself, for it summed up my reactions to many current "explanations" which I instinctively reject.

I myself have never been subjected to a rigorous academic discipline in any subject, but that did not seem to matter for the book opens with a very well written description of the amazing behaviour of the cattle tick. As I read my interest was quickened, for in order to explain why a cattle tick can wait for 18 years before it drops off a twig and lays its eggs on a warm-blooded beast, the author brings in Nietzsche and Heisenberg, and finally sums up by saying "The tick has 'faith' ". That required thinking about and it took me a few minutes to realise that by reading only to page 9 I had found myself possessed of a new fact which would give point to my theology the next time I was trying to explain to an unbeliever what Faith means to a Christian.

The cattle tick's apparent immunity to the passage of clock-time led the author to some interesting speculation about "moments of being", and ultimately to the idea of cyclical time. Circles, coils, spirals get hopelessly mixed up with dots and straight lines if ever I try to construct a model of what cyclical time means to me. But then I am no physicist. My understanding of the concept was derived from a slight acquaintance with Eastern philosophy, from significant lines stamped on my memory by poets as different from one another as Whitman, Eliot and the Isaiahs and from the recurring rhythms which are found by historians as they investigate the growth and decline of civilisations, societies, philosophies and art movements. Now it seemed I was being invited actually to touch the concept, for I was being asked to investigate the rhythms in myself. Apparently alternations of light and dark affect the movement of cells in every kind of living tissue. It is as if these cells receive instructions from the ordered movements of sun, moon and planets. Any desire I have to know where the heavenly bodies themselves get their instructions from must therefore be guided by my own observation of what is taking place within me, and in the outside world of nature in which I find myself placed.

I have never seen a migrating pseudoplasmodium, nor have I ever seriously questioned the existence and importance of nonchromosomal (or cytoplasmic) genes, so I found it hard going, often hard dictionary work as with the unquestioning trust of a child I tried to understand and accept statements which professional scientists may well feel it a duty to criticise. Indeed, one learned friend insists that the pineal gland in man is not where Mr. Bleibtreu says it is. Moreover, I myself seem to find a contradiction in his account on page 206 of the overcrowding of rats in a specially constructed laboratory burrow. But I have a strong hunch that all will come right in the end. And certainly as a layman I

found no difficulty with most of the detailed descriptions of what were for me strange happenings, as plants, insects, fishes, birds and animals move towards perfection of fulfilment. Besides, the author uses the punishment and reward mechanism in a masterly way. When dealing with transmitted memory he refers to the Resurrection; after pointing to the analogy between insect brains and computers he quietly steps aside and reminds us of the function of Excommunication; when describing the ritual food-sharing habits of bees he ends with a paragraph which I quote in full to serve as a sample: "So one can see a curious analogy between the system of sharing a food particle—and at the same time a behaviour-altering chemical—employed by honey bees in the orderly regulation of their societal order, and that employed by the early Christians in the ceremony of the Holy Communion, when a food particle (the wafer) is exchanged along with a behaviour-altering chemical (wine) with the express purpose of forming through the enactment of this ritual, a visible community in Wheeler's terms: a "person larger in scope than the collection of individual selves which confirm its separate parts".

Towards the end of the book I became aware that in terms of the new language I was learning, a new series of biochemical events was occurring in my brain. The author seemed to be getting chatty with some nice thumb-nail sketches of the life stories of von Uexküll, Kropotkin and Lorenz; and though I responded immediately to the challenge that the symbol of the Christian Cross was to be seen as an evolutionary elaboration of a primitive release mechanism, I came to the conclusion that Bleibtreu might not be the prodigy of a dozen academic disciplines that I had thought he was. Bleibtreu might perhaps be a group. I glanced backwards over the pages of this very ecumenical book, and began to feel that I had been trying to cope with a mass of important information, all of which was related to a theme which somehow had got lost. It was like being at one of those huge congresses organized by the World Council of Churches every four years. Perhaps this is unfair to Bleibtreu. A better simile is that of a cocktail party, when one neighbour is reading a string of verses from an old Sanskrit MS, another is discoursing learnedly about the sexual behaviour of mosquitoes, whilst a third is saying with an air of finality: "Being is transient, but life itself is immortal".

But I have now recovered. I would like to see duplicate copies of *The Parable of the Beast* placed upon the book shelves of every theological training college, and I would like to see their students being encouraged to discuss every section of this book with their contemporaries in other faculties. To scientists and technologists I would commend the book as exemplifying one of the latest

developments in Science Fiction—that genre in which today the spirit of prophecy is often seen to be at work. As for those scientists who are also atheists, I suggest that in preparation for Bleibtreu they should read the “Benedicite”, paying particular attention to the last verse before the Glory be. . . . They will find it in the Order for Morning Prayer in the Anglican Prayer Book. I would also suggest that they meditate upon “I form the light and create darkness. I make peace and create evil. I the Lord do all these things” (Isaiah 45.7 in the Authorised Version). But on no account must they allow themselves to be distracted by the commentators. Finally, I would like to ask Bleibtreu when we may hope to hear from him or them again.

#### *IV Gerald Thatcher*

Myth is fairytale and religion has become a touchstone for anarchy. Hippies and yippies are in the streets demanding that we all *turn on*, and yet their actions have *turned off* the society to the dream of the spiritual renaissance that was begun as they first began moving into San Francisco. The situation has become so violent at this date that the Beatles have withdrawn their support of the Revolution, and we are again returning to the philosophy of the absurd and the politics of despair.

I consider it important and absurd that *The Parable of the Beast* by John Bleibtreu has appeared at this time. Important, because it tackles the issues at a much more profound level than any other social document of recent years, and absurd, because the tone of the book is so genteel and careful that it will hardly be noticed by the people who can best profit from its contents. The subject of the book, in fact, will merely stir the surface of the new revolutionary consciousness. It will leave such a small mark, that Mr. Bleibtreu’s voice will hardly be heard in the uproar. I am deeply saddened at this, for the book speaks the truth with the clarity and conviction of a man who is labouring to communicate a Vision.

The main subject matter of *The Parable of the Beast* is biology, but a view of the natural sciences that few men have ventured to undertake:

“This book is about the nature within. The things that appear in nature, the birds and bees and other animals also appear in this book. But they are actors, not subjects. The subject of the book is Man, and all the various animals that fly and crawl and swim through its pages are no more the subjects of these tales than were the fox and geese of Aesop the subjects of his . . . I believe the purpose of a parable is to expand the imagination, not to contract it”.

As I noted above, *The Parable of the Beast* is written with the care of competent scholarship and the genteelness of a stylist who is possessed of great energy. The book begins with a section devoted to “the Individual” and methodically works its way through a dazzling multitude of topics ranging from the sutras of the Indian Yogins, the notebooks of brilliant biologists, botanists, ecologists, mathematicians, philosophers, anthropologists, poets, etc. until Bleibtreu has arrived at a most successful overview of social organization.

Along the way he weaves time, space, magnetic fields, kundalini yoga, endocrine functions and consciousness in and out of his thesis, namely: the only God that died under the flames of Nietzsche’s proclamation was the 1100 year old god called Dogma; the real God still lives, the Self who is the creative mythologist, who has always worked from the substance of prima materia, and will continue to do so until KINGDOM COME.

The most formidable merit of *The Parable of the Beast* is that it recognizes the gestalt of life, that: true knowledge is the single pointed arrow of intuition: For it is intuition that is “a response to the sources of intelligence”. And the source of intelligence is that Primary clear Light through which the Gestalt is revealed, within us all, before the Visionary pineal gland. For those of you who wish to know, this book contains one of the best documentations of research into the pineal, that famed “Third Eye” of the mystics. Right here, in the lab, the wrappings of the veil dropped to reveal the Flame.

But such is not sufficient to create a thesis; next, we are shown the biological factor of molecular memory, and then, how we are bound to cyclic time—a very usable tool for understanding the material causes and results of karma—and with a little yogic imagination, how to spin the Wheel to our own Design.

Jung already showed us what was within the wheel, by pointing out the archetype. Bleibtreu shows us how the Self, the continuing mythologist (they are one and the same), continues to contribute to the racial unconscious, the vital of Aurobindo, the room of the *devas* of Tibet. But that is only the storage bin. Above, the mirror of Zen, the third eye and the thousand petalled lotus of *chakra* yoga stand as the great Creator for what winds up below. Up-down, in-out. Again the same. And here Bleibtreu takes us back once again to the laboratory, first to say:

“Within its [the pineal’s] middle space shines the Supreme and Primordial *Nirvana-Sakti*; She is lustrous like ten million suns, and is the Mother of the three worlds. . . . She contains within her the constantly flowing stream of gladness and is the life of all beings. She graciously carries the knowledge of the Truth to the minds of

the sages”.

Now we are into the principle of magnetic fields. It is this which pervades all matter and all space, locally and universally. Reich called *it* orgone; Einstein called *it* unified field; *it* is consciousness *itself* to the yogins and *it* is the THAT of the Rig Veda. *It* is GOD. *It* is the Primary Clear Light. *It* is the One that underlies all Being, and *is* Being in *its* continuously creative state of becoming.

I am reminded here of a sufi parable:

When God sought to create the universe from His Oneness, He divided Himself into the Lovers. He gave them both desire and identity, so that they would do but one thing to the exclusion of all others, Love. And through their unquenchable desire to attain to the state of Oneness again, anguished at their separation, they propagated the Universe. And thus Creation was accomplished—to this day.

By viewing this parable in terms of eastern wisdom, there is no procreation. This is the Moment that is the same as it was in the Beginning.

Should our social revolution really be the foremost of our worries? If the revolution comes to tear down the factories, then how about manufacture by tissue culture? We’ve barely scratched the surface of organic design systems. DNA and RNA information will go a long, long way into creating the Gardens of the Aquarian Age. I think that the promise of this potential of development should dispense the meagre paranoias of those who think that DNA researchers are only out to control our heads.

And so back to turning on. I’m not a pill pusher. That’s merely the game of those who sell the inner movies. But through yoga of *self* consciousness and the researched insights of *The Parable of the Beast*, I think that we can once again have that Age of Gold which was promised by the ancient theocrats who believed correctly that every man has his own doctrine, and that the first liberty we all require is spiritual liberty.

That’s the greatest value of the book for me.

That’s how the book ends:

“Being is transient, but life itself is immortal”.

And by tuning in to that, we turn on.

*Reply by John Bleibtreu*

It is quite true! As Professor Thorpe observes: I am an amateur of biology. The primary influence on those notions which make their appearance in *Parable of the Beast* is the effect of reading the work of Blake, Joyce and Yeats primarily and reading in the sources which in

turn helped shape *their* thought. I was bored during my education at the Wharton School of Commerce and Finance at the University of Pennsylvania; I worked on *The Four Zoas* and on *Ulysses* during dull lectures on insurance contracts in much the same way that some of my fellow student-sufferers worked on crossword puzzles. When I first came upon them, the “occult” ideas appearing in these works seemed to me just as their reappearance in *Parable* seems to Professor Thorpe—“odd in content, obscure in intent”. Despite this, and almost against my conscious will, I found these ideas challenging, intriguing, and—at some basic intuitive level—filled with an element of “truth” which seemed lacking elsewhere in those structures of thought my educators represented to me as being “real”.

It was while working in the early 1950s in a rapidly obsolescing part of the financial industry—in foreign bonds—a dull and relatively profitless business which was shortly given up by the firm I worked for, when whole days passed with nothing happening, that I began a novel which was pseudonymously published in 1961 by Frederick Muller under the title of *Ride a Cock Horse*. In it, I tried to deal with what I thought of as one of the cardinal errors of our time, the confusion between carnal and religious ecstasy, or with the attempt (which seems invariably doomed when it is “acted out”) to obtain the religious experience through the practice of the carnal experience. The book was not a success in England and it failed even to get an American publisher. Probably, my sense of failure in my ability to deal with this theme, exacerbated my fascination with it and I became increasingly absorbed with the yin-yang of male-female—drawn inexorably into biology.

To my mind, purpose may be inferred in part, at least, from process, from history when seen as process. Unlike mathematics and physics where the historical motivation does not seem so strikingly apparent, biology seems largely to be an historical enterprise, an attempt to create The Great Myth of the Origin of Life.

Like Kropotkin (with whom I gradually became infatuated as the book progressed, and whose prophetic insights will, I feel sure, shortly receive a renewal of respectful attention) I gradually came to share what I consider his vision of the industrial societies as being mobile (when compared to the stasis of pre-industrial societies) and continually engaged in a fumbling search for a knowledge of some “natural laws” within which human kind can flourish harmoniously as do their infra-human kin. In this context, the science of biology appears as the primary intellectual discipline capable of producing ground from which such an effort may proceed.

Dr. Richards is quite right to chide me for writing that “there is

considerable evidence” for the transmission of behaviour by cytoplasmic inheritance. There is no laboratory evidence for this that I know of, but the irregular and unpredictable way in which behavioural traits appear and reappear in the “blood lines” of domestic animals bred for their behaviour is consistent with cytoplasmic inheritance. I believe that the data collected by C. O. Whitman on his pigeons bred for their behaviour and which appear in his posthumous papers supports this contention. Dr. Richards sees this assumption as being unnecessary only because I did not make sufficiently explicit the link between this hypothesis of cytoplasmic inheritance and the transmission of an *experience* by means of this mechanism.

It is difficult to imagine the mechanism by which an experience could be encoded into the structure of the RNA molecule in a brain cell and appear directly attached to the chromosome of a reproductive cell without necessarily passing through this intermediate stage.

The notion may be absolutely wrong, it may be unsupportable by experimental validation, yet to me it is an attractive notion providing a useful avenue of approach to a great many puzzles connected with the evolution of behaviour. It would enable us to comprehend how bits of behaviour can accrete gradually to form an extended migration route or an elaborate ritual.

An example of the kind of experiment which might test this hypothesis appears in *Science* 134 (1961) on p. 835 and again on p. 1068.

Erlenmeyer, Kimling and Hirsch discovered that fruit flies appeared to show a preference immediately upon alighting on a vertical surface to move either upward against the pull of gravity, or downward obedient to the pull. They constructed a maze consisting of a series of spaced vertical screens through which flies had to move toward a bait. The two populations exhibiting extremes of preference were collected in containers atop and beneath the maze. They were then subjected to traditional genetic procedures in an attempt to discover the locus of the gene “controlling” this behaviour on the salivary gland chromosome. The results were inconclusive; perhaps precisely for the reason that the experimenters were searching for a *chromosomal* gene.

On the human level, any evidence supporting the notion that experience is transmittable by inheritance would tend to confirm C. G. Jung’s concept of the existence of a collective unconscious. As it stands now, lacking any such evidential support, the theoretical basis of Jungian psychology is weak, especially since implicit in the theoretical structure is the inference that archetypal experiences pre-exist in the human psyche. We “know” they do—but “how” do they?

# Religion and the Social Anthropology of Religion: II

*Dorothy Emmet*

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In my last article I said that I saw religion nearly in anthropological terms, but not quite, and suggested that the “not quite” called for a notion of creative and sustaining power. In a sense, the anthropological accounts take account of this; but they bring it within their frame of reference by concentrating on the “sustaining” rather than the “creative” aspects of this experience of power, explaining it as the effect of social pressures and social traditions, internalized in the mind of the individual and experienced as support in accepting moral authority. This of course, is very like the Freudian view of the building up of the Super-Ego; only the influences so incorporated are interpreted as influences from social groups wider than the immediate parental ones. Here I think, the sociologists are right; a family is not an insulated unit, and one’s standards can be taken from, e.g. school, church, “peer group” without these having to be seen as substitute parents. But just as the Super Ego in the mind of the individual is seen as an inhibiting rather than as a creative force, so too the view that moral pressures come from social groups can deal more adequately with conservative than with innovatory kinds of morality and of religion, insofar as religion is an ingredient in social morality.

Nevertheless, I think this view can be a strong and important one, particularly in some of its more recent and sophisticated forms. These take us further into morality and religion than can be done if they are only described as ways of symbolizing such moral pressures as support the *status quo*.

This latter is the view associated with Durkheim, the founding father of the sociology of religion. Durkheim, like Edmund Burke, saw societies as cohering and continuing not through conscious planning and direction, but through the working together of a number of different institutional practices, in economic, legal, family, cultural life. But—and this is an important “but”—these complementary practices do not just work together automatically like parts of a smooth running machine, or at any rate they cannot do so in a society which has what he calls “organic solidarity”. A society is not like a machine which is a matter of contrivance. Its functioning depends on a moral discipline which is not merely prudential, in the sense that people can see that it will be a matter of self-interest to follow it. It is much more a matter of sharing certain deep-seated intuitive attitudes of approval and



disapproval, and capacities to feel admiration, indignation, disgust at certain kinds of behaviour—the kind of feeling which Burke called “prejudice”, in a non-pejorative sense, where “prejudice” means an intuitive reaction not reached through conscious consideration and argument. Contemporary moralists would call this an “emotive attitude” view of morality. Durkheim’s point is that intuitive attitudes need to be widely shared among members of a society if it is to cohere and continue with any stability; he speaks of these as forming a “collective conscience” and as “collective representations”. This language is unfortunate insofar as it suggests that a society is a sort of composite being with a composite mind; but we need not take it like this. The point is that these moral responses are not ideas deliberately thought up by nameable persons; they are passed on in people’s education in school, family life, social intercourse, and above all are expressed in symbolic guises in religious teaching and ritual. Durkheim has been criticized for representating religion and morality as social phenomena; but, as Talcott Parsons remarks (*The Structure of Social Action*, p. 391) it is at least as true to say that he makes society a religious and moral phenomenon.

The belief that a society depends for its existence on intuitively held, widely shared, and emotionally expressed moral reactions has recently been re-iterated by Lord Devlin (fortunately with a lawyer’s conciseness instead of a sociologist’s diffuseness) in his Maccabean Lecture *The Enforcement of Morals* [1]. This has led to an intermittent controversy on a very high level with Professor Hart, each of them producing a public lecture or broadcast about every other year (Professor Hart’s main contributions will be found in the three lectures in his book *Law, Liberty and Morality*, Oxford University Press, 1963). Devlin maintains that every society needs to have some emotionally held moral convictions, and that conduct which violates these will be punished by the criminal law, even if such conduct cannot be shown to harm other people in any way other than affronting their moral feelings. However, this latter, according to Devlin, is not a negligible kind of harm, since like Durkheim he holds that the strength of a society will decline if its main moral convictions are weakened. Hart argues against this on broadly J. S. Mill’s lines, that, whatever our private moral convictions, the criminal law is only justified in intervening where conduct can be shown to be hurtful to other people, and not when it is simply held to be *wrong* for any reason other than this. He shows that Devlin is not only arguing that the law should take

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[1] Republished with some other ensuing essays in a volume with this title. (Oxford University Press, 1965).

note of certain kinds of conduct because in threatening its moral codes they threaten the security of society (as for instance, treason might). This threat could indeed come under the rubric of "harm" as injury to society. He is also saying that the criminal law punishes some things because of a conviction that they are *wrong*. (Blasphemy, and bigamy, in a case where the parties might mutually consent, would be examples).

I think Devlin has the better of the argument insofar as he is giving a sociological account of our criminal law. This does indeed punish certain kinds of conduct because they are held to be *wrong* in themselves, and not only wrong in virtue of deleterious effects on other people. Criminal punishment has a ritual aspect as an expression of public reprobation, and is not only seen as something to be justified, if at all, on deterrent, utilitarian grounds. Devlin, is, I think, right here as to the view behind our criminal law [2], though we may indeed find our sympathies lying with Hart as to whether this *ought* to be the view behind it.

Durkheim also held that punishment was a ritual act in which "Society" expressed its indignation at certain kinds of conduct. Such public expression of indignation he says, strengthens the public sentiments which have been affronted. The criminal thus unintentionally serves a social function in providing an occasion for this re-inforcement of moral emotions—as we might say, "*O felix culpa!*"

There are several troubles here, including the fact that moral indignation and sadistic emotion can both get into the demand to see people punished. As a sociological argument of how people regard punishment it should trouble us because it presupposes a general common agreement on fundamental moral convictions, and on crime as always a violation of these. But whatever may be true in very simple societies, this is certainly not true in a complex society such as our own, where there may be differences in moral conviction among different parts of the population. Nor would it hold where a government is seen as oppressive, so that some "criminal" acts might be applauded, and criminals seen as heroes rather than as reprobates. In such cases their punishment may serve to strengthen emotions at variance with those of the dominant powers in a society.

This shows that neither Durkheim's view nor Devlin's version of it gives sufficient weight to the diversity of moral standards in complex societies, or to *conflicts*, and so to divergent sympathies, between different elements—conflicts which occur in probably all societies.

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[2] This is brought on in the *Report of the Royal Commission on Capital Punishment* (the "Gowers Report", H.M. Stationery Office, 1953).

These writers stress the public expression of moral sentiments as something in which nearly everyone except a few “deviants” can join, and so as a way of emphasizing and reinforcing an underlying harmony. And Durkheim (though not, as far as I know, Devlin) sees religion as a symbolic expression of this harmony.

On such a view, the main interest in studying a religion will lie in observing its *rituals*, rather than expounding its beliefs. These latter, in myths and dogmas, will be looked on as stories or images expressing certain fundamental moral values, concerning in particular what are the proper forms of social relations between people and groups within the society (including its dead ancestors and its children yet to be born). They will be seen as *ideological*, i.e. as ways of thinking justified not as theoretical truth, but as pragmatic means of strengthening a way of life. And rituals will be seen as occasions when the values which support the fundamental underlying harmony of society are strengthened through symbolic enactment.

I have said this view, broadly Durkheim’s, stresses harmony rather than conflict, and sees conflicts within a society as deviancies to be brought under control with the help of the ways in which the dominant social values get re-established in people’s minds through emotionally charged symbolic action. Conflicts are seen as aberrations to be corrected and reconciled, and ritual as one of the main social instruments for doing this. Hence the tendency in this view to stress ritual as a means of securing conformity rather than of inspiring innovation. It may not have been devised for this purpose in a Machiavellian way by priests and kings anxious to maintain their own power, as the radicals of the Enlightenment and early nineteenth century thought. But it serves the purpose even better, since those who officially promote it are caught up in the same ideology as the ordinary participants. I called attention in my first article to the confidence trick this could nevertheless involve, if people came to see that what they thought they were doing because of certain beliefs of a “mystical” kind had in fact only a pragmatic justification as reinforcing a social way of life. But I do not want to pursue this line of criticism further now; at this stage I am concerned with sociological analysis, and shall pass to how some more recent work along these lines goes beyond Durkheim’s account, while remaining within his essential method.

This work fastens on *conflict* as a deep-seated, not merely ephemeral aspect of social life. It looks for signs of conflicting moral values, and not only of the “establishment” moral values, within the symbolism of a ritual in a religious ideology. It also sees conflict as something which has to be reconciled if possible, but if not, as something to be contained and lived with.

In looking at some accounts of rituals seen in this way, I shall distinguish three kinds of ritual, which I shall call Palliative Rituals, Rituals of Rebellion, and Rituals of Reconciliation. This particular way of grouping has not, I think, hitherto been made in the literature. It is not, of course, an exhaustive classification of kinds of ritual, but it may be a useful way of distinguishing rituals which deal with social conflict. We can try to see some of the conditions which make for the difference between a palliative ritual, and a ritual of rebellion, and a ritual of reconciliation.

By "palliative rituals" I mean the kinds of ritual which paper over the cracks in the relations between members of the social groups participating in them, stressing ideal unity and not letting the facts of conflict get recognized. In recent anthropological literature Victor Turner's *Schism and Continuity in an African Society* (Manchester University Press, 1957) describes some such rituals. This book is a study of the Ndembu, a people of Northern Rhodesia, whose social arrangements are such as to be likely to produce continual splits and contentions. They have virilocal marriage along with matrilineal descent, i.e. wives go to live in the husband's village but descent is traced through the mother, so that children will live in their father's village but belong by lineage to their mother's kin. This will produce disputes over inheritance, and whom the children are to work for, particularly when hunting plays a large part in the economy, since adolescents are useful hunting partners. These dissensions are to some extent covered up, or temporarily mitigated, in rituals which stress the ideal harmony of Ndembu society. But Turner writes "Ritual among Ndembu does not express the kinship and political structure as in a firmly organized society: rather it compensates for their deficiencies in a labile society. After a temporary drawing together of the people concerned, the troubles are likely to break out again. There is no lasting relief, since no one is clearly facing the fact of real internal divisions which arise from situationally incompatible rules of custom". And even if they did diagnose these, it is difficult to see what could be done about them, short of re-constructing their social arrangements in a way which no traditional tribal society is likely to contemplate. So trouble is likely to break out again, and the ritual be repeated, in a continuous cycle. These rituals are therefore most like the view of rituals given by some psychologists: obsessional, repetitive forms of activity which do not effect anything (except that the palliative ritual, like the neurotic's compulsive one, may effect temporary relief).

Other kinds of ritual—the rituals of rebellion and of reconciliation—may be more effective than this. In the palliative ritual, conflict is under the surface but not acknowledged, as when in our own

society members of a village may continue back-biting in daily life although they attend the same church on Sundays; or, in secular contexts as when conflicts are screened behind brittle small talk in a sherry party. But the "ritual of rebellion" goes beyond the palliative ritual in providing special, licensed occasions in which conflicts and tensions can be expressed. Instead of papering over cracks, it provides opportunities for blowing off steam. Max Gluckman has described some rituals of this kind, and also, I believe, coined the phrase, in his Frazer Lecture *Rituals of Rebellion in South-East Africa* [3]. He describes how by Zulu customs women are normally expected to be decorous in public, not approach cattle (an important part of the economy), not take part in national life or national ceremonies. In certain rituals all this is reversed. Women act as men and behave in normally prohibited ways, taunting and shouting obscenities at the men. But after the feminine Saturnalia are over, they revert to normally accepted behaviour. Gluckman also gives an account, following a field description of Dr. Hilda Kuper's, of ceremonies surrounding the kingship among the Swazi, a kindred people to the Zulu. (The Zulu kingship was abolished after the Anglo-Zulu war in 1879). "One can feel the acting out of the powerful tensions which make up national life—king and state against people, and people against king and state; king allied with commoners against his rival brother-princes, commoners allied with princes against the king; the relation of the king to his mother and his own queens; and the nation united against internal enemies and external foes, and in a struggle for a living with nature. This ceremony is not a simple mass assertion of unity, but a stressing of conflict, a statement of rebellion and rivalry against the king, with periodical affirmations of unity with the king, and the drawing of power from the king" (*Rituals of Rebellion*, pp. 18–19).

Gluckman distinguishes the "ritual of rebellion" where the fundamental, traditional social order is nevertheless accepted and expected to continue, from the revolutionary situation, where it is being seriously challenged, and where the dominant powers may not be sufficiently secure to allow rituals of rebellion. Where there is this basic security (is it sometimes any more than the conservatism which comes from lack of ability to imagine any alternative way of living?), then Gluckman thinks the ritual of rebellion even strengthens the existing order, by letting off emotions which might produce bottled up resentment. It is an opportunity to cock a snook at the established authorities—like the pantomime, or the students' rag, but not like the

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[3] Manchester University Press, 1954. There is also a shorter account of some of these rituals in his *Custom and Conflict in Africa* (Blackwell's, 1955; see especially pp. 115ff).

sit-in. For this last may be a symptom of a genuinely revolutionary situation, not to be relieved by a ritual of rebellion, still less by the palliative ritual of the formal sherry party. Where the basic assumptions of the society are being challenged in a way which goes beyond temporary bravado, then either force will be met by counter force, or there will have to be some radical examination of causes of conflict in the existing social arrangements, along with a readiness for change. This will involve not ritual action so much as realistic analysis and discussion, though it may well be that some form of ritual celebration can set a seal on agreement if agreement is reached.

Rituals of reconciliation would reward study by those interested in the religious aspects of sociology. Unfortunately they need to be seen in their long term results in order to be sure whether what looks like a ritual of reconciliation is not really only a temporarily palliative ritual, covering up a need for realistic diagnosis of the causes of conflict. Yet the literature about rituals suggests certain lines of thought. First, there is the demand that those taking part together in a ritual of a sacramental kind, such as a sacrifice or a sacrificial meal, should first overcome their grievances with one another. This demand is said to be universal at any rate throughout Africa. Meyer Fortes writes (*The Dynamics of Clanship among the Tallensi*, London 1945, p. 98): "One cannot sacrifice propitiously with someone who is an enemy. This according to native theory, would cause the ancestors to become angry, for 'as you are towards each other, so are the spirits of your ancestors towards one another' ". So the sacrifice in which people eat together "is both an expression and a pledge of mutual amity and dependance". The Swiss missionary anthropologist Junod, in *The Life of a South African Tribe* (Neuchatel, 1912) has gone into more detail than this. "Cultivate good relations", people are told; "bring everything to the light". Sometimes angry altercations follow and hold up the sacrifice. Then may come a comic interlude, as when wives run off with the meat of the sacrifice and start eating it in the bush, and have to be chased by people laughing and joking (op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 161–162). We see here not only honesty in bringing grievances to light, but also the beneficial effects of a commonly shared joke in reducing the temperature which might be engendered by the former. In our own sacrament of Holy Communion, the invitation to "draw near" is extended not only to those who truly and earnestly repent of their sins, but who are also in love and charity with their neighbours. But, unlike the Africans, we do not produce opportunities for effecting this before the sacrament; this is one of the ways in which the communal significance of our religious practices has been watered down. One reason may be that in our larger, more differentiated society it is more possible to avoid people with

whom one is not in good will than it is in a small tribal community. But there are still pockets within our society where interaction cannot be avoided; where, whatever people's feelings towards one another may be, they must perforce live and work together. And if they also take part in common rituals of a sacramental kind, they would know, were they a tribal society, that the cost of facing the need to be in charity with one another could not be evaded.

Occasions for the clearing of grievances may not only occur before public sacrifices or other public rituals. They may also occur in the context of rituals designed to help a particular person in a particular affliction. Victor Turner has described one such ritual—the Ihamba healing ritual among his Ndembu—in considerable detail[4]. In this ritual a doctor extracts a foreign substance, to wit a tooth, from some part of the body of a sick man. While he is preparing to do this, the relations and other villagers cluster round and express concern for the sick man and also bring out their grievances against him and against each other. The doctor invites them to come in order of seniority to the hunter's shrine which has been set up to the shade who is afflicting the patient, to confess any secret ill-feeling they may have towards him. Turner writes (op. cit., p. 392): "It seems that the Ndembu doctor sees his task less as curing a sickness of an individual patient than as remedying the ills of a corporate group. The sickness of the patient is merely a sign that something is rotten in the corporate body. The patient will not get better until all the tensions and aggressions in the group's inter-relations have been brought to light and exposed to ritual treatment. . . . Emotion is roused and then stripped of its illicit and anti-social quality, but nothing of its intensity, its quantitative aspect, has been lost in the transformation. The sick individual exposed to this process is re-integrated into his group as, step by step, its members are reconciled with one another in emotionally charged circumstances".

Turner considers that the doctor must have been aware that his production of the tooth from the patient's body (and indeed it was a human tooth, no mere baboon's tooth or pig's tooth as all those present could testify), was a bit of sleight of hand. But he thinks the doctor did genuinely believe that he was withdrawing an influence in some way inimicable to his patient, and that this could only happen as all sources of hostility were brought into the open, not only hostilities towards the patient himself, but between all members of the group. And in fact it could work: the procedure did seem to have a therapeutic effect. So Turner concludes "Ndembu ritual may offer lessons for Western clinical practice. For relief might be given to many suffering from neurotic

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[4] See his *The Forest of Symbols*. Cornell University, esp. pp. 366ff.

illness if all those involved in their social networks would meet together and publicly confess their ill-will towards the patient and endure in turn the recital of his grudges against them. However, it is likely that nothing less than ritual sanctions for such behaviour and belief in the doctor's mystical powers could bring about such humility and compel people to display charity towards their suffering neighbor" (op. cit., p. 393).

This of course raises once more the question of whether the effectiveness of such rituals depends on a belief that something more is involved in them than the expression and management of social relations—whatever form this belief in "something more" may take. We shall be returning to this in later articles; meanwhile let us note that right relationships are sought not just for their own sake but as a means to another end, in this case, the relief of a sick kinsman through the ritual. It might be said that in fact the concern to heal the sufferer simply afforded an occasion for a reconciliation procedure. But this would be a case of seeing an incidental socially beneficial result as the primary purpose of the ritual—a tendency to which some functional anthropologists (not Turner) are all too prone. But as with the sacrifice, referred to above, the reconciliation takes place in a context where there is also another concern—in this case, the healing of the patient. This may be significant: rituals may be more likely to effect reconciliation when they are not exclusively undertaken for that purpose, but where there is some serious common concern for which mutual reconciliation is seen as a necessary condition. Also the ritual is more likely to be a genuine occasion of reconciliation when the participants know each other and interact with each other in other contexts. If they only meet each other in the ritual context, language about mutual reconciliation can hardly be more than a formality.

The conditions for a ritual to be a ritual of reconciliation appear therefore to include a wider common concern, realism in diagnosing and acknowledging conflicts, and mutual acceptance of one another, producing readiness to say and to receive what has to be said—and perhaps, as in Junod's example, resources of joking behaviour when things get out of hand. But there may be situations where the structure of social relations will lead to similar troubles recurring and where, on a longer view, the ritual will be seen only to have been a palliative ritual. This may well be the case in some of the witchcraft-cleansing rituals, where the fact that someone is in a marginal position in the society will lay him or her open to renewed suspicion when misfortunes occur; or where some class, women for instance, have to carry responsibilities but are not given a share in the authority and decision procedures of the society. Or a social arrangement may impose conflicting claims on people, as does the virilocal marriage combined with matrilineal descent



among Turner's Ndembu; or as do assumptions about family obligations and job obligations for many women in our own society. In such case, goodwill engendered in ritual will not meet the problem; what is needed is a re-alignment in social relations, and this calls for rational analysis of the existing set-up and for readiness to change it.

A social anthropologist may be able to detect some of these unacknowledged conflicts expressed in a non-overt way in the symbolism of a ritual which overtly expresses ideal harmony. He may do this better if he is aware of a depth-psychological as well as a social-structural side in the relations between the participants, and if he looks at the symbolism with this double interest. Turner does this in a paper *Symbols in Ndembu Ritual* [5]. He speaks of a "polarisation of meaning" in ritual symbols. At the "ideological" pole these refer to moral norms and principles in social life; at the "sensory" pole they are associated with natural, generally physiological, phenomena (such as those connected with sex, eating, other bodily processes). These latter can arouse emotions which are then harnessed in support of the principles expressed at the ideological pole. "Norms and values on the one hand become saturated with emotion, while the gross and base emotions become ennobled through contact with social values" (op. cit., p. 32). Psycho-analytic interpretations fasten on the sensory pole, but tend to regard the ideological pole as irrelevant. An example would be boys' initiation rituals. Where these include circumcision, Freudians see these as expressing the fathers' jealousy of their sons, and their desire to produce castration anxiety and make an incest taboo secure. This leaves out the sociological interest in a *rite de passage* whereby boys are tested through bearing pain in order to acquire adult stature. This double interest is illustrated by Turner's analysis of the Ndembu "milk-tree" symbolism. The Ndembu's own story says: "The milk-tree is the place of all mothers of the lineage. It represents the ancestors of women and men. The milk-tree is where our ancestress slept when she was initiated. 'To initiate' here means the dancing of women round and round the milk-tree where the novice sleeps. One ancestress after another slept there down to our grandmother and our mother and ourselves the children. That is the place of our tribal custom, where we began, even men just the same, for men are circumcised under a milk-tree" (op. cit., p. 22). The milk-tree (*Diplorrhynchus mossambicensis*, Ndembu name *mudyi*) exudes white latex, which carries an obvious breast symbolism. The tree is the place where boys are circumcised, and of the girls' puberty ritual. A girl has to lie

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[5] Re-published in *Closed Systems and Open Minds*, ed. M. Gluckman, Edinburgh 1964.

absolutely still under the tree for a whole day, while women dance round, sometimes singing songs taunting the men. The girl's mother is excluded and her daughter may not look at her. At one point the mother brings along a meal of cassava and beans and offers it in a large spoon, which other women snatch from her. "We are told that the milk-tree represents the close tie between mother and daughter. Yet the milk-tree separates a daughter from her mother. We are also told that the milk-tree stands for the unity of Ndembu society. Yet we find in practice it separates women from men, and some categories of women from others" (ibid., p. 27).

We see a conflict as well as a harmony in family relations expressed implicitly in the symbolism of the ritual, and the power of the white milk symbol, which suggests dependence on the mother, being harnessed to an attempt to break the dependence. If power to face a new stage of life and new responsibilities is engendered in the ritual, Turner here sees it as stemming from the combination of emotion aroused by the "sensory pole" of the symbols and the ideological values enacted in a drama of social relations. In this paper (though not in some of this more recent work to which I shall be referring in a later article), Turner speaks as though this were a complete account of the ritual and the power which comes through it. It is of course a pragmatic view, in which a ritual and the myths associated with it are seen as instruments for promoting a common social life. Such a view can take us a long way into the symbolism; far further than the view of ritual as a form of compulsive, and so ineffective action, which Ruth Benedict gave in the article on "Ritual" in the 1934 *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*. It is instructive to compare this article in the 1934 *Encyclopaedia* with the article on "Ritual" by Edmund Leach in the new *International Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences* of 1968. Leach sees rituals not as compulsive behaviour, but as communication systems within a context of social relations. We have already travelled a long way in the twenty four years between these articles. We may need to travel further, if we are to do justice to the belief that rituals are concerned with man's relationship to a wider cosmic environment and not merely to his familial and social environment. This, at least *prima facie*, is the theme of rituals and their associated myths in our own society, as well as in the African societies from which our examples have been drawn. The question is whether this wider reference is in fact a disguised way of expressing facts of social relationship, or whether these facts of social relationship supply a symbolism which also has a wider reference. Perhaps we should say that family and social relations, their conflicts and their reconciliations, are so intimate and insistent a part of life that we not only turn to them for our symbols, but find that the struggle to

get them right is a necessary, though not the sufficient and sole condition, for achieving a right relationship to healing and creative power. I shall pursue this at a later stage. In the next article, however, I shall first look at some recent views (notably that of Lévi-Strauss) which revive an interest in primitive man not only as social being but as philosopher.

# From Mailbags to Maturity\*

*Merfyn Turner*

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*Our modern English prison system, as we call our nineteenth-century Pennsylvania inheritance, is like the mythical old soldier who never dies. But unlike him it doesn't fade away. Successive Home Secretaries have blamed their penal sterility on antiquated prison buildings. A prominent civil servant of the thirties said they were only fit for dynamite. But nobody saw fit to experiment.*

*So a century and a quarter later we are still strangled by our nineteenth-century penitentiaries. There have been changes and some notable alterations to the system, and departures from it. But fundamentally it remains what it was designed to be, a monument to salvation through separation.*

*So with the characteristic innocence and ignorance of the layman, I have abolished it. In its place I have imagined a system that is worthier of our times. I have not considered the causes of crime, which is where reform should begin. To remove causes—and they are preponderantly sociological however reluctant we may be to confess it—is to undertake a social revolution. We are not ready for it. I have not considered juvenile crime either, or youthful offenders. The Government has published its plans, and there is merit in them. I have not touched upon the Borstal system, or I would have dynamited that also.*

*I have confined myself to prisons. The plan that follows means the total abolition of the traditional walled institution even where strict custody is called for in the case of the most dangerous aggressive offenders. Instead of high walls and cell blocks concentrated as they are largely in urban areas I have substituted either rural settlements, or—in the case of Industrial Centres—new establishments on the site of some of the present local prisons. They would take the form of small, single-storey huts or chalets centred on the industrial workshop.*

*The terminology I have used is probably confusing and unsatisfactory. This is easily remedied. It is the plan that is important. In outline this is its structure:*

1. Two custodial sentences only

*Simple Imprisonment of five years for the Inadequate Offender.*

*Preventive Custody . . . of ten years for the Aggressive Offender.*

*Both sentences give the possibility of conditional release, after*

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\* Obtainable in pamphlet form, under the title "Prisoners' Progress", from Housman's, 5 Caledonian Road, King's Cross, N.1 (Price 2s.).

*one year (Simple Imprisonment) and three years (Preventive Custody).*

2. Simple Imprisonment is served in Farm Colonies. Preventive Custody is served in Industrial Centres and Labour Units.
3. For Inadequate Offenders who do not require a custodial sentence (*Simple Imprisonment*) *I have relied on methods of Community Care. But for the weakest and most dependent I have provided Farm Communities on the lines of the Labour Camps of Finland.*
4. *Instead of our traditional Remand Prisons—or remand facilities in Local Prisons—I have suggested Reception Centres. (The name is unsatisfactory perhaps because it is also used to denote centres administered by the Ministry of Social Security. But it conveys my meaning.) All offenders would be held in the Centres to await trial where bail is not granted, for pre-sentence reports, and for post-sentence allocations. There would be no cell blocks or solitary confinement (at present most prisoners awaiting trial are restricted to their cell for twenty-three hours of the day and night, and kept in idleness), but single-storey units giving work and association for those who wanted it, and segregation where it was legally or medically required. Far too many offenders are currently remanded in custody who could safely be released into the care of responsible members of the public who would be proud to help the courts in this way.*

*The expert and the specialist may well be irritated by what they may see as an over-simplification of the issues. But our present system was simple when it was created. It is now a highly complex machine that is far removed from contact with prisoners as people and potential citizens. It could be that those of us who are not specialists but interested laymen find it easier to create something that is new and adventurous. It is at least my justification for what follows.*

#### THE PENNSYLVANIA MYTH

Two hundred years have passed since our courts began transporting our convicts to America, and a hundred and twenty years or thereabouts since the Americans repaid the kindness by exporting to us penal ideas that she was in the process of discarding. We incorporated them into Pentonville Prison. It was our first penitentiary—or place of penitence—and the prototype of the Modern English Prison.

The principles we imported, in common with the rest of Europe, were those of the Pennsylvania System. It stood for punishment

through solitary confinement. The system which the Americans ultimately preferred—for economic reasons—was the Auburn System. It stood for punishment through silence. Prisoners were brought out of their cells to work in association. The order was for silence. They were flogged if they broke it. In matters of cruelty and repression there was little to choose between the two systems. But Auburn was less costly to the taxpayer.

The history of the modern English prison is the story of slow change and continuous disagreement over the purpose of imprisonment. At the start they said prison was for punishment. But punishment needed a moral justification, what they called purpose. So it was punishment for the good of the prisoner. If it was severe enough it might deter. So deterrence became a purpose of imprisonment. As the movement to aid prisoners gathered strength late in the nineteenth century penologists argued that prison should help a man into freedom. Prison was rehabilitative. This became the keyword for the first half of the present century, although few people, and least of all the prisoner, took it seriously. After the Second World War, when even prisons were caught up in the wave of reform, the chief purpose of prison was defined as training the prisoner for freedom. This became the first of the prison rules.

Nobody said what exactly constituted training. But the word had a comforting sound. It was left to Lord Mountbatten to declare that the first purpose of imprisonment is the protection of the public, and its duty is to fulfil this function if necessary at the expense of any or all of the remaining functions.

Mountbatten published his Report and was hailed as a hero—not for the first time in a distinguished though vastly different career. Even penal reformers who should have known better joined the rest of society in praising his proposals. They at least should have known they were putting the penal clock back. But Lord Mountbatten should not be blamed. In fact he may quite fortuitously have become the father of a new system, for what he has revealed is that however much we have changed the Pennsylvania System the more it has stayed the same. The penitential fortresses we see daily in our large towns and cities may have seemed necessary a hundred years ago. We have no need of them today.

As a system it has failed. We deny that it is meant to punish. It does not deter. It used to be said that eighty per cent. of men sent to prison for the first time did not return. If the present trends continue, in ten years' time our prisons will contain eighty per cent. of men who have been inside them before. It does not train or rehabilitate. It gives but temporary protection to society, for almost all prisoners will be

released at some time or other. And to obtain that protection it keeps more than thirty thousand men in captivity, only a small proportion of whom really gives society the cause to call for protection.

But the failure of the system is only one reason for its abolition. It is also an anachronism. It was dying before it crossed the Atlantic. It is decent that it should be buried, a century and a quarter out of time.

## A NEW HORIZON

What we need is a new system that has its basis in simplicity. There should be only two forms of sentence, for two categories of offenders, imposed by two higher courts, of Quarter Sessions and Assize, and served in two types of establishments. This offers a sound basis for a new penal system for adult offenders.

1. *There should be two forms of sentence*—Simple Imprisonment and Preventive Custody. Both should be indeterminate sentences of five years (Simple Imprisonment) and ten years (Preventive Custody), release being possible after one year in the case of the former, and three years in the case of the latter. In all cases release should be conditional.

Both forms of sentence would be given by the higher courts. The act of depriving a man of his freedom should be seen to be too serious to be undertaken by lay magistrates. Simple Imprisonment would be given chiefly by the Quarter Sessions, and Preventive Custody by the Courts of Assize.

## SIMPLE IMPRISONMENT

This would be used for those offenders who are deemed to be *Inadequate*. They are people who do not appear to be markedly ill, mentally or morally (e.g. psychotics and psychopaths), but who yet fail to find a secure place in an accepted pattern of social life and, having little capacity for making satisfactory personal relationships, express themselves through crime, alcoholism, personal eccentricities, or vagrancy. For the most part they can be trained, supported, and supervised into useful citizenship.

At present the number of inadequates—those who are more unable than unwilling to live crime-free lives—in our prisons is variously estimated. They vary from a third to a half of the total prison population. If one takes into account the whole range of inadequate offenders, from relatively superficial to serious personal and social handicap, the figure may lie somewhere between the two estimates, or between eleven and fourteen thousand offenders. However approximate the figure is, it represents a substantial problem for those who administer the prisons. Moreover, it is a custodial problem that need not exist.

The inadequate offenders may be divided into three groups:

1. Those who cannot survive without long-term support which in some cases may need to be permanent.
2. Those who can be cared for in the free community, usually with the help of special or skilled services.
3. Those who need custodial training and re-education, and may have to be directed where they will live and work after release.

### *1. The Permanent Inadequates*

The sentence of Preventive Detention which was introduced in the Criminal Justice Act of 1948 and abolished twenty years later was intended to protect the public. Most of the offenders who were sentenced to Preventive Detention threatened no one. Their crimes, which were only exceptionally violent, varied between persistent frauds and false pretences which showed a degree of personal and social disturbance to the small nuisance crimes which indicated an incompetence on the part of the offender in the management of his life.

Jim, for example, had been sentenced to twelve years' Preventive Detention for the theft of four pocket radios. He had been caught because an observant policeman noted the contradiction between his rough and unkempt appearance and his somewhat bulky raincoat. He had to be persuaded to appeal against his sentence, and helped to prepare his statement. The Court of Appeal set him free. For three months he survived. But he demanded the support and the attention that a small and insecure child demands of his parents. In a burst of childish resentment against an incidental withdrawal of attention he went drinking, stole a radio, and was sent back to prison for seven years.

During the last months of his sentence he was sent out to work, returning each night to the prison. His fellow prisoners were betting on the certainty of his failure, and they were proved wrong. With the security of the prison framework around him—and probably the goodwill of a tolerant employer—he was able to survive fairly adequately.

He continued to survive uncertainly after his release. He telephoned a friend. "This is Jim. Nobody wants me. They've all washed their hands of me. I'm going back to the nick. Sorry I troubled you". Three hours later he telephoned again. "This is Jim. I've done what I said I would. I'm in the nick". Jim had not in truth committed any offence, and he was not in the nick as he called it. But he was sending out a desperate cry for help and friendship.

Jim is typical only of himself. But men like him sentenced to Preventive Detention, and to short periods of imprisonment, proliferate



on the prison scene. Preventive Detention has been abolished. But we have substituted the Extended Sentence for it which differs only in non-essentials. And although courts become reluctant to use short sentences of imprisonment, the inadequate offender will doubtless continue to serve his days and weeks for offences that tell us less about his attitude to society than they do about society's attitude to him.

Inadequate men like Jim who reveal a great immaturity of personality or a serious subnormality should not be sent to prison. They should be required by the Quarter Sessions before whom they will appear when they have committed offences to live in Farm Communities specifically designed for this purpose.

The Labour Camps of Finland provide an example which could be adapted to our needs in England. These are camps which provide for the homeless and workless recidivists who are about to be conditionally released or are already free but facing social and economic failure.

The work of the Labour Camps is road construction. There is no sham about it, for making and maintaining roads in Finland, as every geologist and naturalist knows, is a battle against Nature. It is real work, much of it mechanized, and all of it hard and demanding. When a section of road is completed the camp moves to a new site.

A Labour Camp in Finland does not lack the comforts of urban life although it is a temporary encampment in a rural area. There may be a hundred and fifty men living in fifteen or more huts which are centrally heated and fitted with electricity. They have the customary refinements of radio and television. They have a large communal canteen, and a shop. A mobile shop visits them three times a week. And, of course, they have a Sauna.

The small number of men who have families are given permission to visit them. Permission is also granted for evening visits outside the Camp. But the picture one forms is that of men who need the security of the Camp, and who tend therefore to stay around in their free time, washing their clothes, watching the telly, playing darts (the Finnish variety), or just sitting and talking.

The advantages of such camps are self-evident. The physical cost is minimal. They perform a service to the State. The men earn workers' wages. They provide the homeless inadequate offenders with a ready-made community.

The idea of the Labour Camp could be adapted for our needs in England. Groups of offenders might not be permitted to build roads. But they could be established on the land. Rural depopulation is no longer a phenomenon. It is the penalty we pay for what we define as progress. The further one proceeds from urban developments the easier it becomes to acquire land for hill and dairy farming, and afforestation

as a subsidiary activity. It should be possible, therefore, to acquire land for Farm Communities. They would differ from the Labour Camps of Finland in four respects. They would be more permanent. They would work with smaller numbers. Offenders who came from the courts could be required to remain for five years. There would be greater opportunity of interaction with the neighbourhood, and therefore of permanent and free settlement within it.

The offenders who would benefit from the Farm Community are those who, like Jim, need the security of an organized routine, and a framework within which life deviates little from day to day. They settle well into a prison routine. For the most part they would settle well in the Farm Community also. Society has no need to prescribe the former. It should create the latter.

## *2. The inadequates who can be cared for in the free community*

Len came to London from the provinces when both his parents died and he was left with none to support him as his parents had done for twenty-five years. Lonely, friendless, and unnoticed, he committed his first crime, in the heart of London's West End, and in broad daylight as well. Disappointed that his crime should appear to have passed unnoticed, he returned to the scene and invited detection. That was in 1940. Twenty years later he had seven convictions on his record, and six prison sentences which included five, eight, and twelve years' Preventive Detention. Like Jim, he had to be persuaded to appeal against his sentence of twelve years. The Court of Appeal set him free to live among friends in a small home for men like himself. After four years he moved out into a home of his own creation, and a wife into the bargain. He is now in his fourth year of married life, self-directing, and a good and useful citizen.

It is men like Len who have not grown up who can be helped in a free community. They do not need psychiatric help or social therapy, but a healthy, understanding, supportive climate in which they can mature. Small homes, like Norman Houses for example, meet their needs and help them to realize their potential. So do private families and individuals. Imprisonment is unnecessary and wasteful. It cannot stimulate growth. It limits the range of experience to what is necessary to keep the prison machine running. It is also repetitive. It supports the inadequate offender in his escape from reality, and so removes from the free community a responsibility it is well able to accept.

Groups 1 and 2 represent inadequate offenders whose adjustment to a satisfactory way of life does not require imprisonment. Their problems can be solved without it. This does not mean that the process of growing up and making new adjustments is simple and

uncomplicated. But it can be contained in a normal environment.

The criminal behaviour is only one symptom of the inadequate's problems. There may be sexual difficulties, and a retreat to drugs and alcohol. There may be physical handicaps of a physical and psychosomatic origin. Skilled help is usually available. But without the affection and acceptance of natural or artificially created families (Half-way Houses) and individuals, the inadequate who needs it may lack the incentive to receive it or indeed to profit by it.

Where the inadequates we have so far considered are married—and most recidivist inadequates who have been married have lost their wives on their prison journey as we lose luggage on a train journey—and they are living in socially and economically deprived and depressed communities, the court which is dealing with the father's offence should have the power to order the removal of the family to socially, physically, and economically healthier neighbourhoods. As more workers join the growing army of commuters who prefer not to live where they work, the State must direct the creation of new communities—as opposed to new towns—outside the industrial and commercial centres, where provision is made for a proportion of inadequate families who can be absorbed into the new communities. This is in direct contradiction to the present situation where those who can move away, and those who cannot must stay behind.

People do not accept “social misfits” by virtue of inborn goodness. They do it when they have been nurtured and educated into it. If we are to create new communities where the secure and the strong will support the insecure and the weak, the State must teach its children that learning to live with people is infinitely more important than with the computers of a technological age.

The inadequate offenders of the third group present a different problem. They are:

*3. Those who need custodial training and re-education, and may have to be directed where they will live and work after release*

The offenders in this category present a problem of training which the State must provide. They would receive a sentence of Simple Imprisonment which they would serve in Farm Colonies.

Pat was a young Irishman in his early twenties, with a history of neglect, family rejection, and institutions behind him. He had drifted into London, where he lived wherever he could find shelter, worked fitfully, and leaned heavily on the State for his maintenance. He was not unintelligent, unimaginative, or work-shy. But he was impulsive, and undisciplined, and unpredictable. He acted without heed for the consequences, and was miserable when he had to suffer them—usually

in prison. His café associates would describe him as “a head case”. But the psychiatrist would classify him as “a social problem”.

Pat, and others like him who frequent the prison scene, cannot be trained in conditions of freedom. Conditional discharge and probation call for a greater degree of responsibility than they possess. Prison cannot help them because they do not co-operate to the degree that might make them “good prisoners”, eligible therefore for privileges which could help their development. In any case they cannot be placed in an open establishment, for they would succumb to the temptation to escape.

They could profit from training if it were long enough, and purposeful, and imaginative. The Farm Colony would meet these requirements. They would learn the skills that modern agricultural methods employ. They would see the fruits of their labours. Living in a community of some thirty or more men, they would acquire the skills that living with people demands. There would be escape from neither. They would be released, not sooner than one year and more probably on average after two and a half to three years, not to return to their former social environments but to a neighbourhood designated by the Central Board, and there apply the training they had received at the Colony, either in the employment of local farmers or on one of a group of farms attached to the Colony. These small farms could be rented to small teams of conditionally released inadequates who would be advised and guided by Farm Managers attached to the Colony, and who would be competent also to be their general and personal supervisors.

After five years from the date of sentence they would be free to move where they chose. It is not fanciful to believe that the majority would be happy to stay where they were. In the case of married offenders with young families, the family should be encouraged and helped to move into the neighbourhood of the Colony.

It may be said in criticism that there is too much uniformity about the idea of Farm Colonies and that there should be a variety of country-based occupations for which the offender could be trained. This may be true. In fact, however, the uniformity probably exists only on paper. A farming community is no more homogeneous than any other community. There are farmers who express themselves fully through their work. There are others who find only partial satisfaction in their farming but are industrious in a variety of allied activities. Some may also deal in livestock. Some may specialize in transport. And some may acquire farm equipment and hire themselves out to neighbouring farms. If the basic training given at the Farm Colonies is sound, the offender will use it in the light of his own personality needs and so provide the diversification that the original plan may seem to lack.

There may be objection also to the suggestion that the family of the married offender should be helped and encouraged to move to the neighbourhood of the Farm Colony where the father is held. But the family is involved in the father's inadequacy. It may well contribute to it. It certainly suffers by it. Instead of the haphazard help it may—or may not—now receive from the State and voluntary organizations, the family must be brought into the programme of training and education that Simple Imprisonment means for the father. The promise of a happier life in a new environment should not be blighted by objections based on the concept of the liberty of the individual, for such a concept has little reality for inadequate families who have not the remotest chance of facing the complexities of life on an equal footing. They flounder and fail. But they could succeed with support in a simpler setting.

It is worth noting that when the children of gipsy families in Norway were taken away to be educated, the parents elected to move with them. What was designed as a service for the children thus became a service for the whole family.

### PREVENTIVE CUSTODY

Preventive Custody is intended for those offenders whose aggressive criminal behaviour causes real and serious injury to the public.

It is a form of custody which is intended primarily for the protection of the public. But it is positive custody also, for it seeks the eventual resettlement of the offender in a free society. It has a maximum length of ten years with the possibility of release after three years. It plans a gradual return to the community, with supervision and direction until the end of the tenth year where it is deemed necessary. The maximum of ten years may be extended if it is clear beyond reasonable doubt that the offender would return to serious crime if he were to be released. The experience of other countries in this field suggests that where they find it necessary to continue custody above the sentence of the court, the offenders in question should be in psychiatric hospitals rather than security prisons.

The sentence of Preventive Custody will be imposed only by the Courts of Assize. It will be passed not solely on the offence before the court but also on the assessment of the offender's personality which is based on his personal and social history as well as his criminal record.

In the case of the most serious criminal offences the sentence of Preventive Custody should be served in specially formed Labour Units which give security for society and work for the offender that is personally satisfying and socially useful.

Sexual offences of a violent nature should not be deemed an

automatic qualification for the Labour Units.

There should be two types of Preventive Custody centres:

1. Industrial Centres
2. Labour Units.

### INDUSTRIAL CENTRES

For all except the most serious minority of aggressive offenders, Industrial Centres should be set up wherever they are required in urban districts and as often as possible on the site of existing prisons. But the prisons themselves should be pulled down. On the fact of it this may seem a prodigal waste of material, labour, and money. But the traditional prison has demonstrated that it cannot be adapted for new ideas.

In the Industrial Centre there should be one industry only. Its products should be sold on the open market. Too many prisons the world over produce too much equipment for too many State departments. There is, for example, a growing market for prefabricated units—houses, garages, caravans. There is a market also for pre-cast building materials. Where the Industrial Centre is based on an agricultural area it could undertake the repair and maintenance of farm machinery. It is not the markets that are lacking but the imagination to produce for them.

The Industrial Centres should vary in size, the smallest providing for thirty men and the largest for one hundred. The men should be accommodated in huts or chalets, each housing ten men. A member of the staff would be responsible for each chalet. After two years the offender would become eligible for promotion to a job outside the Centre. It would be a continuation of the work he was already doing at the Centre, where he would return each evening. If his progress was deemed satisfactory he could be transferred to a small hostel outside the Centre, which would be controlled, but not necessarily run, by the Centre.

Conditional discharge under realistic supervision could be given at either stage. The failure of offenders to qualify for a progressive stage should be analysed by the staff, whose findings, perhaps with a recommendation for transfer to a different Centre, would be submitted to the Central Board. It is not anticipated that the offenders at the Industrial Centres would need to serve their full sentence in custody.

### LABOUR UNITS

No man is born a criminal. We shape the child into the man, It is a part of natural justice, therefore, that those who offend most seriously against society, and who suffer the greatest punishment by way of

prolonged separation from society, should have the opportunity of performing work that benefits the community. Long years of negative captivity under modern conditions of high security inflict a degree of suffering on the offender that society, which in its humanity has abandoned capital punishment, has no right to demand.

There are in this country dead and decaying neighbourhoods which are a legacy from the Industrial Revolution. They have no further wealth to offer, and therefore no further usefulness.

There is in North Wales, for example, a Copper Mountain. It is set on a scene of great natural beauty, but is itself a square mile of total ugliness. Slag and sulphur have destroyed even the resilience of nature. The Mountain cries out for restoration so that families may come there again to picnic, and children to play, and old men to sit, and talk, and look out to the distant sea.

This is essentially a long-term project that long-term prisoners could successfully undertake. Security in the modern setting is a matter of fences, and lights, and geophonic paraphernalia which can be applied as successfully to the perimeter of a mountain as that of a prison. The Mountain is pitted with ridges and shafts which offer sudden death to the unsuspecting. The shafts could be made safe. The ridges could be landscaped. The slag could be carried away to make roads, and new earth brought in to replace it, so that natural life could flourish again.

The offenders would live in huts within an inner encampment where there would be freedom for them to create their own community. They would work the hours that are normal for any group of constructional workers, and be paid the wages that are usual for constructional work. They would support themselves, and those who were married would support their families also. And they would save for their release however distant that might seem at the outset.

The unit would need to be numerically small—not more than thirty offenders perhaps. And it might be necessary to limit their term of duty to a year, after which they would return to base—the Reception Centre—both as a change of scene and a temporary rest from their labours.

The Copper Mountain is one example of long-term projects that need to be undertaken for the benefit of the community, and which are also suited to the enlightened treatment of the most aggressive and dangerous criminal minority.

## RECEPTION CENTRES

A system of Simple Imprisonment and Preventive Custody starts with the courts. They will decide who is the inadequate offender who

should be sent to the one, and the aggressive offender who should go to the other. For their decisions they will lean heavily on the personal, social, and criminal reports that must be submitted to the courts before any sentence is imposed. Clearly there will be differences of assessment and classification, and a no-man's-land where no clearly defined assessment can perhaps be made. These are difficulties that will be resolved as experience grows and new techniques add to our understanding of human behaviour.

The offenders will appear at the lower courts as they do at present, and they may be tried there and convicted. But they cannot be sentenced to either Simple Imprisonment or Preventive Detention by the magistrates, who will be required either to confine themselves to non-custodial alternatives or to refer the offenders to the higher courts. Some offences may only be tried by the higher courts. The offender will continue to have the right in some instances to be tried where he chooses. But before sentence can be given the offender must be remanded to a Reception Centre where he will remain until the reports and assessments have been completed. He will return to the Reception Centre after sentence so that he can be allocated to the unit that is most appropriate to his sentence and his own needs.

## CONCLUSION

This is what I have imagined. It breaks with the past because there is nothing to be gained by temporizing with it. It can be criticized on many fronts. It may be said that it is too naïve, and fanciful, and again that it finds its simple remedies in a new form of transportation—to the rural areas. But it does not appear so fanciful when we study the make-up of so many offenders we now send to our traditional prisons, whom we call inadequate offenders, and by which we mean an inability in varying degrees of seriousness to order their own lives. Or, in the words of an Appeal Judge who was about to set such a prisoner free: “The trouble with you is, you are too inadequate even to commit a crime successfully”.

At the other end of the scale we have the small minority of seriously aggressive offenders from whom the public must be protected until they have ceased to be a source of injury to it. It is not fanciful, but realistic and humane, to establish Labour Units where they will spend their time serving the community and, it can be hoped, fitting themselves for their eventual return into it.

Wherever one goes one sees signs of a growing consciousness of the defects of national penal systems and a desire to bring them into line with modern times. But nowhere, so far as I am aware, is there a total renunciation of the old ideas, only adaptations of them. Even Sweden,



which is regarded as the modern penological Mecca, cannot free itself of its Pennsylvanian shackles. It sterilizes them and makes them shinier. What we need now is something new, exciting, and adventurous, a penal system that is more worthy of the age we live in.

# Scottish Holiday

*Maurice Clayton*

---

And did you see the torn hem  
Of cloud  
Skirt through those peaks . . .  
All that excess of gazing;  
Do you remember how we sat  
Or lay or stood  
Or leant, eyes bent  
On distinguishing those  
Vanishing horizons.  
Eagle-eyed for  
Distant crystals, straining  
The truth from this  
Northern wetscape.

Hell's teeth that we should have been  
Slapped down so soon on the  
Saddle-soaped heels of  
The romantics.  
They should have been confined to cities.  
So now we must scrape god off  
Every bloody stone in nearly  
All the shires and all  
Our shores round.  
It would have been less disappointing  
To have stayed at home  
With a kaleidoscope  
[Or is it a sitar?] to  
Tune our tiny brains to . . .  
Now teach us to think  
Straight, out of line.

Just what possessed the overcultured  
Fools who stuffed  
Our childminds  
Into this stupid shape?  
We came five hundred mounting  
Indigestible miles to find  
The selfconscious gag

[Of trying to be appreciative]  
TOO MUCH! ,  
And did we go up there for  
God or mountain greenery  
[With a thurible fashioned  
Like a camera] ?  
And if those sucked shades  
Of distance are the purple  
Shapes of the Holy Spirit then  
I'm a fenman and the hole  
I live in is hell!

But [easy there] later, later it was better  
No briars clutched with each  
Few innocent steps to the  
Nerve endings: that was the darling day  
The eyes would meet and did not need  
To look away  
With the sunshine warming our

Gay tentpod we popped one  
By one into the mountain morning  
Opting unwittingly into the  
Children's hiding game  
Sometimes crouched behind a rock  
Now brackenburied, violating the  
Very heather in the glen  
By sitting on it while we  
Counted up from one to ten.  
And 'COMING' was thrown back  
In shocked triplicate from the  
Solemn rockface. Good it was  
To teach the youngest how to hide  
All of himself; and when we  
Found we both had hid together,  
Laughing, with our heads pressed down  
In the springy pubic heather . . .

Then all at once must go, go on;  
Pack, strap, roll and all hitched on  
Very much together in a little car.  
Following a flimsy strip of road into  
The stern appraisive shadow of the Cuillins.

**But the stage was set. The flashed  
Compulsions and compassions in a four square  
Family, will suffice to shepherd  
Three thousand feet of glowering granite  
[God forgive me!]  
Into a lovely pastel backdrop.**

# Student Power

*Mary Beasley (a powerless student)*

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“What do you think about ‘student power’?” I asked a senior member of the University.

“Damn all” she replied, “I’m crushed beneath the wheel of circumstance.”

That remark turned out to be the crux of the matter as far as the present state of unrest in universities is concerned. But before I go on to elaborate on the causes of student protest, I should say a word as to where I personally fit in to the picture. As the biographical note at the end of the Journal indicates, I am a third year ‘mature’ student at a university which was very much in the news a few months ago as a result of a ‘sit-in’ in the administration building which lasted three days and three nights, after which certain concessions were made to student demands.

Like many people, I was extremely irritated by the sight of the Great Unwashed, long-haired, bearded, hippie-type students packed like sardines into the newly decorated administration building, apparently demanding to be allowed to participate in the running of various aspects of university life, when they had shown themselves to be totally incapable of even running the students’ union efficiently. I personally had had no cause for discontent either with academic tutors or with the authorities in my Hall of Residence; all had been extremely helpful and reasonable in every way, and I could not see what all the fuss was about. It was through discussing the situation with members of the academic staff in the first instance that I discovered what it was all about.

Two main areas stand out as being at the root of the trouble; communications and bureaucracy. Communications in this context mean relationships between academic staff and students. If this were a purely sociological exercise, I should embark straight away on a discussion about ‘anomie’, ‘social cohesion’, and all the rest of it. But the picture becomes clearer if one starts by comparing the relationships that existed between undergraduate and don in pre-war Oxbridge colleges with those that exist in present day red brick universities.

With the exception of those on scholarships, the pre-war Oxford or Cambridge undergraduate came from the ranks of the wealthy and privileged. His status was assured by his birth, and the acquisition of a degree was less important than the social life with all the facilities for widening his circle of acquaintances of those from similar backgrounds.

Going up to Oxford or Cambridge was a mark of his status, not a means of upward mobility. He would be in a college with about two hundred others; there would be a high proportion of dons to undergraduates, and the two groups would mix freely, since in many instances the dons would have been the contemporaries of the undergraduates' fathers in the very same college. By and large, it was a closely knit community, with little, if any, conflict. The situation may not have been as clear cut as I have made it appear, but this could be regarded as the 'idea' of pre-war university education.

Let us turn now to modern red-brick. The upper-middle class student will usually be in the minority; the majority will be the first generation university students in their families, and many of these will have come from working class backgrounds. To them getting a degree opens up new horizons; it means a better way of life than that enjoyed by parents, it means both economic and social improvement. With this in mind, the pressures from both school and family may be considerable; even without these pressures—or even the converse where working class parents consider that what was good enough for them should be good enough for their children—the difference between success and failure is such as to be a pressure in itself.

The community into which the student arrives is of a somewhat different nature to the Oxbridge college. He will indeed find himself living with between two and three hundred other students in a Hall of Residence, that is, if he is not in lodgings, but Hall is simply the place where he eats and sleeps. The main community is that of the university campus where he will find himself milling around with literally thousands of others. If he is reading a popular subject, he will be attending lectures with several hundred other students, and the nearest he will get to a member of the academic staff may be in a seminar group consisting of ten or twelve people. Bear in mind also that this may be the first time the student has been away from home, as opposed to the pre-war Oxbridge undergraduate who will have been to public school. His social contacts with the academic staff will be limited if he is in a large department, and even if this is not the case, social contacts may be hampered by the fact that most universities are still essentially upper middle class institutions and students from other backgrounds may feel ill at ease socially with the academic staff. Take for an example of this social orientation a notice which appeared in a men's Hall of Residence: "Gentlemen are reminded that ties should be worn for dinner". The term "gentlemen" will not be one to which most students are accustomed, he will rarely wear a tie, and dinner is the meal he eats at 1 p.m., not 7 p.m.

Even if we discount the social obstacles which may in some cases be

a factor to be taken into consideration, certainly during the initial stages, most provincial universities have expanded very rapidly in the last decade. The result is that the informal contacts which previously kept the staff in touch with students' opinions, on such matters as the content of their courses and the quality of the lectures, can no longer function effectively. Take for example the Sociology Department at Leicester; ten years ago there were about a dozen students, now there are two hundred specialists, another two hundred doing Sociology as part of the first year course for the B.A. Social Science, not to mention those taking Sociology as a supplementary subject or as part of a Combined Studies degree. In spite of this, there has not been a proportional increase in the number of lecturers.

To sum up the situation as far as communications are concerned: the student at a modern provincial university is a member, not of a relatively small, integrated community, but of a community several thousand strong. While on the one hand success is imperative, and even without the pressures which apply particularly to a working class student the class of degree decides the future occupation for all, there is on the other hand, little control over the means by which this success is to be achieved. On the contrary, the people who have the main control over the situation which is to determine the future are, for the most part, remote beings.

The second major point concerns the structure of the university itself. Any community requires some form of administration, and the larger the community, the greater the need for professional administrators as opposed to the administration being a function performed in this instance by the academics themselves. The classic counterpart is that of a hospital in which there are three hierarchies, medical, nursing and administrative, but the effective power is in the hands of the unskilled from the medical point of view. So it is with universities where the power has moved from the academic hierarchy to the administrative hierarchy. It could be pointed out that there is an academic, in the person of the Vice-Chancellor, who has overall control of the administrative affairs of the university, but the answer lies in the nature of bureaucratic power which is such that on many issues administrative decision making has the final word over academic decision making.

At first sight it appears ridiculous to talk about 'domination' and 'control' in a way reminiscent of the power exerted by a mid-nineteenth century capitalist over his workers, in which situation one could only gain at the expense of the other. In a university it would appear that all are working towards the same end and that therefore such terms are irrelevant. But the question is, who is working towards

what end in a university? The goals of academic staff and students are similar, although the latter may at times disagree as to the means of attaining them. But the administrators, however much they are concerned with the ends of the university, are bound to be concerned with its smooth running, and since the former ends are vague and the latter is a pressing day to day exigency, need we wonder that it can come to occupy their minds?

This is not something peculiar to university structure; there is the hospital example mentioned above, and it is a feature of any institution which is large enough to need professional administrators, as opposed to smaller institutions where the people engaged upon the main task do the administration as a side-line. Robert Michels describes the way this affects the running of a political party:

“Thus, from a means, organization becomes an end. To the institutions and qualities which at the outset were destined simply to ensure the good working of the party machine . . . a greater importance comes ultimately to be attached than to the productivity of the machine. Henceforward the sole preoccupation is to avoid anything which may clog the machinery”. [1]

The master of bureaucratic theory, Max Weber, describes the relationship of a politician to the machinery of government as that of a ‘dilettante’ to the ‘expert’, the trained official who stands within the management of administration [2]. Weber goes on from analysing this distinction between the legislative and administrative aspects of government to talk about the pure interest of bureaucracy being in power. This hypothesis depends to some extent on the psychological make-up of the individuals within the bureaucracy, and would thus vary accordingly. But irrespective of this factor the hard fact remains that in a university a large proportion of the power has shifted from the academic to the administrative hierarchy.

It is not possible to quote some of the most striking examples of this shift of power since these are not likely to have reached the ears of one not involved in university politics. Nevertheless, it is possible to give some illustrations of the way in which administrative rather than academic considerations have been the primary factor. In the first example I am going to have to be rather devious since what took place behind closed doors along the corridors of power clearly should not have reached my ears. While discussions were taking place, as a result of the sit-in, as to what concessions were to be made to the students, it was suggested that they ought to sit on a certain committee which was responsible for action taken on behalf of, and representative of, the university as a whole. This would appear reasonable, especially since there was no question that the number of students on the committee



would be such as to involve control of that committee, and since students are part of the university. This proposal was rejected on administrative grounds, that it might spoil the smooth running of the committee; it was not a question of that particular committee's work being beyond the competence of students.

This particular example is indicative of a situation in which the academic staff are in conflict with the administrators; it would clearly be more satisfactory to quote further examples of this conflict, but as will have been seen, this is beyond my scope. The word of several academics must suffice; it does however appear to be a universal problem, and one which, like the breakdown in informal staff-student communications at departmental level, has become pronounced as a result of the rapid expansion of universities.

The overall picture then of the university community is one consisting of three groups, students, academic staff, and administrators. The ultimate power on many issues is in the hands of the administrators who have little contact with the student body. The students often see the power as being exercised by the academic staff, rather than through them, and consequently may direct their protests towards the academics, who are therefore subject to pressures from both sides. Hence the quotation at the beginning is more apt than might at first appear.

An example of this three cornered conflict occurred just prior to the beginning of the academic year when students' accommodation was being arranged. One Hall consists of private houses with such large rooms that many have up to now housed three students to a room. The Hall Warden who clearly had the academic achievement and wellbeing of her students in mind rather than administrative efficiency, had persuaded the administrative authorities to open a new building, which incidentally had stood empty for a year, in order that it would no longer be necessary to have three people to a room. At the same time the University was opening a house elsewhere which had been converted into bed-sitters and was about to be inhabited by graduates and other older students. Having this house ready for the beginning of term did not appear to have been treated as a matter of urgency; when term started without the house being ready, the administrator in question intended to, but fortunately in the end did not, place each of the bedsitter inhabitants in the empty beds in triple rooms. Had this occurred, graduates would have found themselves each sharing a room with two freshers, aged eighteen and wet behind the ears, without so much as a word of warning should they have wished to make other arrangements. Without doubt the Warden would have been the first target for complaints, although the real cause lay with an administrator

who would never set eyes on the students concerned, while the Warden had been acting in the interests of the students in pressing the administration to open the extra building; an action which was considered uneconomic by the administration, but important for the students' comfort by the Warden.

This is probably a gross over-simplification of the situation, and as a student I should hardly make the lecturers out to be the noble martyrs they are not. The discussion so far has not been a description of the total situation, which anyway would be beyond the scope of this paper, but has taken the form of a model to illustrate one pattern of conflict between the three groups. This conflict pattern arose as a result of the main source of power within the university being located outside the academic community itself, but this is not to say that the academic staff are powerless. There are in fact senior people among this group who probably have as much interest in maintaining the status quo as do the administrators, and who do not regard the students as full members of the academic community. I have deliberately avoided the issue of equality, since it could be validly argued that from an academic angle they might not be considered equals, but since a major function of a university is to educate students, they are surely not without some say in the matter. A certain professor is alleged to have stated that the staff-student relationship should be one of master and servant; another informant quoted the same professor as saying it should be that of master and apprentice. Even the more moderate version implies a relationship in which one person is dominated and controlled by another. A similar example occurred recently when third year sociology students queried the fact that the closing date for handing in a field work dissertation (a degree requirement in that department), was stated in the regulations to be "before the end of the Spring Term", but had been interpreted by the department as 10th December. The arguments for and against this decision are irrelevant, but the significant fact was that some of the staff present tried to end the dispute on the grounds that "you are under our authority and that is that".

This adds a further element to the conflict patterns. The students therefore find themselves at the bottom of an authoritarian structure, with pressures being exerted from two sources. There are the pressures which are administrative in origin, and those which come from the academic staff direct. The academic staff, as we have seen, are subject to pressures from the other two groups. So far I have not discussed the pressures directed towards the administration, only that exerted by it; one such pressure is of an internal nature and consists of pressure to resist any change which would adversely affect the smooth running of the machinery, the other is external pressure from the academic

community which arises from the diversity of function.

These are the conflicts which arise from the social structure of the university; mention has already been made of the other pressures on the modern student. This is certainly not a comprehensive analysis of the situation, and leaves many interesting stones unturned. For example, the earlier discussion concerning the university as a means of achieving upward mobility could be expanded to a fuller discussion as to whether intellectuals now form the power elite in this country—a not unreasonable hypothesis in view of the need for a high degree of specialisation, and the importance attached to the roles of experts, for example, the roles of Dr. Balogh and Professor Kaldor in the economic life of this country. Such a discussion would involve a deeper examination of such concepts as elite groups and role theory than space permits. Suffice it to say that such an investigation might show the stresses on the student to be more accentuated than they appear here; but this is wild speculation. Other topics of a theoretical nature arising from this field would also provide interesting avenues for exploration by sociologists. The purpose of this article, however, has been to put forward some of the more recognisable causes of conflict arising from the social structure of provincial universities.

It would be justifiable to ask at this point why the end has been reached without a substantial definition of student power, as opposed to the factors which give rise to the demand for it. The answer is that student power is not yet a reality; students have indeed been granted concessions, such as minority representation on many university committees, but should such vital matters as the agenda for meetings be controlled by authoritarian administrators, such participation is nothing more than an evasion of the real issues. Student power means a deeper involvement in a structure from which students are becoming alienated, but which lies between them and increasingly high stakes, as far as the importance of achievement is concerned. But if one could find the real solution to this, one would have found the answer to a root problem of modern society.

#### REFERENCES

- [1] Robert Michels: *The Conservative Basis of Organization* from "Political Parties" (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1949).
- [2] Max Weber: *The Power Position of Bureaucracy* from "Essays in Sociology", translated and edited by H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., London, 1948).

# Colloquium on the Quantum Theory and Beyond: A Report

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The small informal colloquium "Quantum Theory and Beyond", of which we gave notice in an earlier issue, took place last July in Cambridge. The Cavendish Laboratory invited the participants. The sponsors were the Royal Society, the Carnegie Institution of Washington, and the Epiphany Philosophers (Theoria Inc.). A full report of what went on will be published in book form later by Cambridge University Press.

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The following general conclusions express the general "sense of the meeting" rather than overt conclusions reached by the colloquium.

1. It must be regarded as doubtful whether there can be a unitary theory of physics. A great deal of detailed consideration was given to Bohr's position, which, as is well known, does not permit the theoretical possibility of one complete physical theory (as well as to the more general but related conflict between the idea of a theory which lays down the whole detail of nature, on the one hand, and on the other the idea that such an ideal is neither possible nor desirable). Although all features of the philosophical and physical theories deriving from Bohr were subjected to critical examination and reconsideration, this assertion was not overthrown. In other words there is no clearly marked line for future development that would lead to one complete physical theory.

2. The Bohr, or Copenhagen interpretation, whether it is correct or not, is certainly insufficient. There has got to be considerable development, beyond Bohr, as well as some reconsideration of assumptions.

3. The most important feature that was agreed was that there is something seriously wrong with the combination of quantum theory and continuity. Discontinuity must be taken seriously and used, not assumed to be an aberrant use of a really continuous space and time.

4. It is clear that what is needed is new mathematics that takes seriously discrete values only. There was no agreement on exactly which mathematics. Various new systems were expounded by Atkins, Bastin, Bohm, Drieschner and Penrose. These systems share a preoccupation with finitism and discreteness and for *that* reason are

consonant with each other in that they can be compared and contrasted with each other more easily than any of them can with current theory.

It is clear that there will be a considerable element of conventionalism in choosing the new mathematics, to represent, especially, a new picture of space and time.

5. It seems to be agreed that the only infinity that will be permitted will be a potential infinity – a finite set of points with a rule for adding more when needed. Such a rule must be a physical process of interpolation that can actually be carried out: in order to interpolate another point a set of performable operations must exist to make the cut, and it would be natural to introduce probability calculation here as well as a finitistic postulate.

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General philosophical interest is very naturally aroused by some of the expedients that have been used to make the bridge between macroscopic and microscopic levels (in physics), macroscopists can here be defined as those physicists who wish to derive the small from the large, and microscopists as those who wish to derive the large from the small. The microscopists have a struggle on their hands to show that their “building bricks” approach can be made to work as a matter of technical physics, in building a bridge from microscopic to macroscopic phenomena. Their efforts, moreover, are made vastly more difficult by a dogma of quantum theory which asserts that when a measurement (or sometimes an “observation”) takes place there is a sudden convergence of an initially spread out – and therefore macroscopic – effect on to a single microscopic one (the so called collapse of the wave-function).

In other words, quantum theory is already assuming one kind of micro-to-macroscopic transformation to exist at the heart of its interpretation of its own formalism. Now the microscopists desire a systematic and logical explanation in terms of quantum mechanics (and of formal operations naturally definable in terms of this alone) of all the transformations required to get from microscopic pictures and concepts to the macroscopic scale. Therefore they have to avoid a circular argument in which they explain the micro/macroscopic transformation in terms of a mechanics which has that transformation built into it. Their whole endeavour, together with the difficulties that arise from the quantum mechanical idea of measurement, can conveniently be called “measurement theory”, and their problem “the measurement problem”.

In the colloquium, several detailed theories were proposed which aimed at solving this “measurement problem”. However the different steps in the arguments which the proponents of these theories

presented could not be evaluated merely on a basis of technical quantum formalism and totally without reference to the wider context of the colloquium, within which the adequacy of that formalism could be called in question. Given that no solution was proposed which provided startlingly new experimental results (and that *that* had been achieved was claimed by no one); whether or not a given step in an argument carried conviction was always partly conditional on the degree of acceptability of more novel points of view (including those of later contributors to the colloquium who proposed radical alternatives to quantum theory as a whole) which avoided the necessity of solving the measurement problem, together with the circularity to which we have seen it gives rise.

Wigner moreover – a supporter of the colloquium who was not able, however, to come – stresses the fact that no form of quantum theory and certainly no measurement theory has succeeded in eliminating an essentially incomprehensible appeal to the magical effects of the act of getting knowledge. That is to say at some point all theories slip out of their difficulties by asserting that at the moment of observation something new enters; they do not however explain how that “something” comes to have the alleged effect. This failure is of great importance for Wigner because he finds in it a loophole in the explanatory scheme of physics through which the characteristics of living structures can find a way.

The colloquium, did not really differ from the negative conclusion of Wigner about what he refers to as this “epistemological” appeal of all current forms of quantum theory, but most participants saw no necessity to follow Wigner in fearing that if the measurement problem were solved quantum theory would complete physics as an explanatory scheme. On the contrary the second half of the time was devoted to different efforts to advance – as the title suggested – beyond quantum theory.

When we turn from the effort to complete the microscopist’s world picture by extending it upwards towards, and subsuming, the world of the macroscopist, and look on to the macroscopist view, we encounter immediately the influence of Niels Bohr, a photograph of whom watched us with knitted brows from the mantelpiece of the King’s Audit Room where we met. Bohr, with his familiar reliance on the necessity of obtaining quantum knowledge by way of classical description and laboratory scale experience, was the most profound macroscopist; profound, because he rejected all facile solutions to the problem. The opposing view, that “just as classical mechanics was an advance over Aristotelian mechanics so quantum mechanics was an advance over classical mechanics, and so why keep classical

mechanics?”, which is usually associated with microscopism, is certainly more wide-spread. But in fact Bohr was right to the extent that we must be aware of the degree of our committedness to classical concepts as our primary step in understanding the microscopic nature of the world.

There were several highly interesting papers in which people tried to extend or modify our classical language and concepts. The first startling impact of these papers on a philosopher of science or person with an ordinary intelligent interest in the advance of thought, would have been to see what a profound – and profoundly difficult – thing it is to make even the smallest change in our conceptual framework for dealing with the world around us on all levels of size. Those who speak as though you can change theoretical constructions at will would benefit from an experience like this colloquium, and this is the sense in which Bohr was vindicated. The average physicist, on the other hand, tends to think that because quantum theory has had undoubted conspicuous numerical successes, its general applicability to phenomena of all types is to be assumed – at any rate until the contrary is proved.

In the colloquium, one participant read a paper “Beyond What?” He began a detailed enquiry into the question of how much quantum theory gives us beyond the imposition of a merely mathematical discreteness on to an unaltered continuous classical mechanics.

It was the constructional aspect of Bohr’s thinking which gave rise to the Copenhagen school. Bohr wanted to formalize his insight by saying that all the experimental procedures, theoretical concepts and methods of description relevant to the acquisition of a given piece of knowledge about the world, formed a unity. He went on to argue that because of this unity there could be two mutually inconsistent pieces of knowledge about the world. The whole coherence of the experimental arrangements would prevent your obtaining both at the same time. This argument was used by Bohr to explain the well-known complementary character of the wave and particle pictures, and is closely related to the understanding of the uncertainty relation

$$\Delta p \Delta x \geq h/2\pi.$$

Nobody came – even from Copenhagen – prepared to defend the whole of this Copenhagen position. Actually the unities on which it depends are indefensible, and it relies far too much for its strength on the fact that current quantum theory presents no adequate alternative. It has therefore to be concluded that Bohr did not ultimately succeed in establishing the position of the macroscopists as against the microscopists.

Bohr’s general argument has been used – not least by Bohr

himself — in reverse. It has been claimed that quantum complementarity is a special example of a much more general law, according to which all experience has two mutually exclusive aspects. It has been suggested, for example, by Mackay in his paper on complementarity, that the religious and the material descriptions of a given situation are such aspects. The colloquium afforded no support of any kind for such ideas.

What can we say of the future? There was a remarkable convergence of interest at the colloquium on to the direct clash caused by the existence of the discrete aspects of the quantum mechanical world with the predominantly continuous classical concepts (especially in view of the un-get-away-from-able character of the latter which Bohr had so profoundly stressed). It can be foreseen with some assurance that the microscopist/macroscopist division will look very different, even if it is identifiable at all, in the Beyond of quantum theory; for all the suggestions that were made for remedying the discrete/continuous/conceptual clash, presupposed that we should have to build up our concepts of space and time in a conscious and explicit way. In any such program we should have to dig below the intuitive ideas of the space continuum which we ordinarily rely on when we think of building up macroscopic objects from microscopic ones.

There is still one question. If Bohr has gone, does this mean that the most sophisticated current theory which includes an “epistemological” element in physics itself has also gone — that is that the great physicists of the twenties were wrong in their intuition that quantum physics inescapably gave the observer a place within the theory? We shall not be able to answer this question until we know where the new theories that are to have a real place for the discrete locate that place. Discreteness may in some way derive ultimately from the existence in the world of primitive discriminative agents capable of making distinctions. In this case the great quantum physicists will have been proved right in the most general aspect of their intuition even if not in the more detailed aspects.



## Comment

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### *Mysticism and Religion*

I look forward to *T. to T.* as to no other quarterly. But, by way of personal criticism, I think that your fine magazine gives the impression that religion is somehow to be equated with mystical, or at least unusual, experience. This is an attitude that I deplore. I believe that religion is primarily not theoretical but practical: that it is not a particular aspect of culture, but a way of living; and, in reflection, it rests not on some peculiar element in experience, but on a particular way of regarding *any* experience—perhaps in regarding it always as a small part of the whole. I have certainly nothing against mysticism; indeed I should say that a mystical element enters into all reflective experience, and not least into science. But mysticism is primarily an *aesthetic* experience carried to the limit at which it tries to reach an intuition of the whole; and so breaks down, finding the whole ineffable. For it is characteristic of aesthetic experience that it can only intuit and express an individual element *within* experience, and so must put a frame round it. Mysticism is a legitimate and important aspect of religion where the capacity for it exists. But it is not a foundation. For religion is primarily communal, while mysticism is almost fiercely individual. Also the original foundation of religion must, I think, be an experience which is common to everyone everywhere at all times. I think that this source can only be the inherent mutuality of the personal—the universal experience of being oneself a member of a personal group, such as mother and child, husband and wife, a family, a tribe, and so on.

I have found the most worthwhile material so far in *T. to T.* to be Margaret Masterman's four chapters. And she ends with a conclusion identical with my own, though on other grounds, that the two most distinctive products of Christianity in the modern world are modern science and modern democracy.

John Macmurray.

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### *Mythology*

Some of those who read my letter in the last issue of *T. to T.* must have been confused by my appearing in the last sentence to go back on much of what I had said in the rest of the letter. The sentence as printed appears to say "There are truths which the intellect alone cannot grasp, that is why we need a mythology about the effectiveness of intellectual methods in approaching truth"! Unfortunately, though in a perverted

way, this makes some sense.

The passage as I wrote it read “Many truths are not expressible in our present day language because we have not developed the concepts or the thinking to cope with them. Such truths speak to the human heart and not only to the intellect; that is why we still need mythology. Even modern science has a mythology – though it might more properly be called an anti-mythology – that the world can be cut up into little bits and each bit examined and described in isolation from the rest and that this somehow gets us nearer the truth of things”.

I was referring back in these remarks to the passages I quoted from Vladimir Solovyov’s Lectures on Godmanhood about the apparent difficulty of understanding the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. This doctrine, as expressed in terms of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, is indeed a mythology, but this does not mean that it is in itself unthinkable. It is only unthinkable to what Solovyov calls “the externalist, mechanistic intellect . . . which regards all objects in their one-sided abstract exclusiveness, in their separateness, and in their outward interrelation in terms of space and time. . . .” The simultaneity of the three Persons of the Trinity was thought philosophically in Vedanta as Sat-Chit-Ananda and their successiveness in the dialectic of Hegel. But because modern man is imprisoned in a dualistic intellectual type of thinking – though he is trying now to escape from it – this truth still has to be preserved for us in a mythological form.

And if the mythologies of the ancients are considered by the modern intellect as naïve and childish, I wished to point out that the view of modern science, which believes that observation by the senses, analysis and intellectual thinking can by themselves ever comprehend reality, is as naïve and childish as any ancient mythology. Modern science proudly imagines that it has made mythology unnecessary. It is indeed immensely powerful in enabling us to do things with nature externally, but to understand it innerly we still need to develop the power to think what the ancients needed mythology to express.

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### *Adventure on the Frontier*

Frances Banks in her book, *Frontiers of Revelation*, speaks of the need for “an embryo university for spiritual studies, in its threefold aspect of research, integration of knowledge, and teaching”. Teilhard de Chardin also felt the need for a research unit for religious matters. In a letter to Pere Victor Fontoynt quoted in *The Religion of Teilhard de Chardin*, by Henri de Lubac (Collins, 1967), he writes (p. 248)

“What would you say about an association of people sufficiently

mature and congenial (in our order, or close to it) whose aim would be to formulate, draw attention to, and suggest in a provisional and initiatory way, solutions for the problems of the religious order that have now to be faced? I am struck by the fact that the Church almost entirely lacks an organ of research (in contrast with everything that lives and progresses around her). Yet she will never keep the faith luminous for her children and for those outside her, except by seeking, in a search that is felt to be a matter of life or death. . . . There you have a fact that may astonish the smug theologians, but it's a fact of everyday hard and salutary experience. There must, then, be organized under the direction of the Ecclesia docens, an Ecclesia quaerens. In these days there are crying problems that nobody, outside a few private conversations, expresses clearly or faces directly. There are ideas, still rudimentary and partially erroneous, but liberating, which germinate and die in the mind of individuals. . . . We should have, I'm sure, an organ (sure, obedient, esoteric) to collect, centralise, and sift all that; I would almost call it a 'laboratory', set aside for such work. I'm not shutting my eyes to the immense difficulties and the suspicion setting up such a 'factory' would meet with! But the question is above all to decide whether the institution is not practically essential or at least a timely device, if we are to be in time to prevent a schism between natural human life and the Church".

This was written in 1917.

Joan Miller.

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### *What is a Church?*

In the editorial of the October number of *Theoria to Theory* we are told: "the most current sociological view is that a church just expresses the values" of secular institutions "in religious terms". I cannot believe this; we should certainly read "the institutions of society in the remote or recent past". At other times the corresponding criticism has been that the church reflects imaginary values, in no realistic relation to current affairs. Churches are not normally accused of moving with the times. No doubt in an age of rapid change they are slow to distinguish between the vision and its last institutional embodiment, but new institutions shaped by this moment of crisis would be worn out in twenty years. What is needed is a reshaping of decision procedures, not only in the churches, but in other institutions, without breaking the structure. In some places, including the Church of England, this may be impossible, and yet it is right to work for it. In others, where ten years

ago it seemed utterly impossible, it seems to be happening, and there too it is right to go on with the formation of new organs, such as the German Katholikentag, and the new use of established associations, for the expression of lay opinion in the Roman Catholic church.

Comparison between the Kremlin and the Vatican would have more point if there were any evidence that the Kremlin pays attention to the views of Communist parties outside the sphere of its military might. I do not believe that the Czechs or their leaders "protested in the name of world Communism to world Communism". Rather the people of Prague were returning to their traditional role of resistance to crusades, German or Russian, Catholic or Communist, in the name of King Wenceslas and Masaryk. In so doing they may have helped Russia to return to her role as a great power, instead of a sponsor of world revolution. The Christian Church, on the other hand, is by her nature universal, yet constantly embodied and involved in a diversity of social and cultural situations. Her problem is to live with this diversity in unity at a time when a whisper may be carried instantly from one end of the world to another. The flight into the exotic, oriental or medieval, is an escape from this responsibility. It is not to be confused with the necessity of recovering contact with aspects of human experience which have been neglected in the west but preserved in the east, especially but not only the Christian east.

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# Reviews

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## More Castaways

*Minerva Reef*, by *Olaf Ruhen*. *Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1963.*

The six Tongan schoolboys who were rescued in September 1966, fifteen months after their shipwreck on the uninhabited island of Ata (see *Theoria to Theory*, January 1967) were not the first group of real-life castaways in the Pacific during the last decade. These boys must have known the story of their fellow-countrymen, the seventeen crew and passengers of the *Tuaikaepau* which went aground on the Minerva Reef on 7th July 1962. The survivors were finally rescued 112 days later on 16th October, and the story of their heroic struggle for life and near-miraculous escape caused a great stir both in their own island of Tonga and in Fiji, where they made their first contact with the outside world after their escape.

Olaf Ruhen in *Minerva Reef* gives a detailed account of the entire episode, apparently based on conversations with the survivors and their rescuers, and drawing on his personal knowledge of the Pacific Islands and seas. It is not, in my opinion, a particularly well-written book. It takes rather too long to reach its main section, the period on the reef. This delay in coming to the point would be amply justified if the author were more successful than he is in giving the reader a clear picture of the seventeen Tongans involved, but in fact only the captain, David Fifita, emerges clearly and indeed one would like to know more about even him. The account of the period on the reef is full of fascinating detail, concerned both with the technical problems of survival and escape and also with the inter-personal stresses that developed, but here again I had difficulty, even at a second, careful reading, in fixing in my mind from one episode to the next the personal history and personality attached to each slightly exotic name. A good novelist would surely have done better.

But with these reservations, this is a book to be read by anybody with an interest in the poor forked animal, naked, unaccommodated man, simply because it is fact and detailed fact, being neither *Robinson Crusoe*, the *Swiss Family Robinson*, *Coral Island* nor *Lord of the Flies*. The *Tuaikaepau* was a total loss and her crew had little of Robinson Crusoe's luck in salvaging much of use from her. Moreover, Minerva Reef is not an island but a stretch of murderous coral only uncovered at low tide. No coconuts, no birds, no wood for building and burning, no pigs, no savages, and, above all, no water. The seventeen men could not have lived at all if an earlier wreck, a Japanese fishing-boat, had not been impaled on the reef at a crazy angle some 1½ miles from the point

where the *Tuaikaepau* went down. The shipwrecked party were able to make their home on the remains of this wooden boat and to salvage enough miscellaneous materials from it to keep themselves alive for 14 weeks and also to build a small boat in which David Fifita and two companions sailed for 7 days over 500 miles of ocean to the Fiji Islands to get help.

During their 112 days on the reef, the men lived on the fish they caught, ranging from sharks to crayfish. Their biggest problem was water. No rain fell for several weeks and they were totally dependent on what they could distil by means of a clumsy, improvised still made out of a kettle, a barrel and a length of tubing. To keep the still going, and also to attract attention to their position and plight, a fire had to be maintained day and night. This had been lit with the aid of a single match found in the wreck and it was only kept alight by a 24-hour watch and at the expense of gradually burning up their "home" and the timbers which were needed for building the boat and sending out floating distress signals.

The seventeen men ranged in age from a youth of 18 to a man of 46. Most of them were physically fit; several were actually semi-professional boxers. One or two besides the captain had experience of navigation. There was, however, one non-swimmer. There was an engineer and two carpenters. All but one were practising Christians of various degrees of devoutness, five Roman Catholics (including the captain), two Mormons and nine Methodists. They all prayed together – though the Catholics also had extra devotions on their own – morning and evening and on various emergent occasions. One of the few items salvaged from the *Tuaikaepau* was a tattered Tongan Bible which they dried out and read from regularly, preaching sermons to each other, mostly about escapes and deliverances in the Old Testament.

Time was carefully organized, having regard to daylight, the state of the tide, etc., and all but the sick were required to work at the tasks of fishing, distilling water, fuel-preparation, keeping the fire going, salvaging and, later on, boat-building. Food was pooled and fairly shared; and water was very strictly rationed. The sick were given special consideration in the distribution. The greatest privation was the extreme shortage of water and apparently everybody, with the sole exception of the captain, David Fifita, succumbed to the temptation, whenever opportunity arose, of stealing a mouthful more than his share.

If one compares the real-life adventure of Minerva Reef with its various fictional prototypes, one is immediately struck by the fact that the men on the reef suffered a far more extreme challenge to both

ingenuity and endurance than any of the fictitious characters. They cannot be compared to a solitary (*Robinson Crusoe*) or a family (*The Swiss Family Robinson*) or a group of schoolboys (*Coral Island* or *Lord of the Flies*) because of the composition of the party. They were all adult (more or less), all men and, apparently, culturally homogeneous. There were, however, marked differences of temperament. Also some family relationships (father and son) obviously influenced their behaviour. Unlike the characters in fiction, they were not Western Europeans and their familiarity with the Pacific may have saved them from some of the worst of the possible terrors. Nor were they likely to treat the situation as a holiday adventure, though Ruhen describes the pleasure of the only non-swimmer in learning to swim and the eagerness of some of the younger men in acquiring prowess at fishing.

What is most striking, however, and encouraging is that they did act as a disciplined and compassionate community. They quarrelled at times—one fight is recorded—and they all, except David Fifita, stole water. But they looked after the sick as well as they could, buried or otherwise disposed of the dead (four men died on the reef and one was lost in the desperate adventure of the trip to Fiji) with care and ceremony, and accepted the organization and discipline imposed on them by David Fifita, who was plainly a magnificent leader, taking the worst privations and heaviest tasks upon himself.

The role of religion in this real-life situation makes an interesting comparison with its role in the fictional ship-wrecks. William Golding in *Lord of the Flies* seems to see “religion” as a predominantly evil force. His little boys invent a Beast out of their frightening experiences and propitiate it with bits of meat and rhythmic chanting. The more rational characters – and especially Piggy, the embryo scientist – become victims of the superstitious mass (a mass based, incidentally, on a disciplined Anglican choir-school). If *Lord of the Flies* is in any sense a novel about original sin, Golding would seem to include “primitive” religion among the results and characteristics of this sin. The Tongans on Minerva Reef, however, seem to have had more in common with Defoe’s seventeenth century English puritan, Robinson Crusoe, than with Golding’s primitives. The regular daily prayer-meetings, Bible readings and preachings (the salvaging of the Tongan Bible is an extraordinarily Robinson Crusoe touch) belonged to the rational, hopeful, daylight, organisational side of their lives, not with the bad dreams. At the very moment when their ship began to go down, they prayed, “not the frantic, unintelligible prayers of frightened men, but a prayer given intelligently and considerately in David’s comforting voice, a prayer to which they all responded”. While they were on the reef, David instituted a rescue drill. This began with prayer.

during which the Tongan flag was raised to the mast-head. At the landing-place, where they imagined a rescue boat had arrived, there was to be further prayer, after which they would listen to the orders the rescuers would give. At the first sight of the coast of Tonga, another prayer would thank God for their safe arrival home. This was all carefully rehearsed and it does seem an extremely disciplined and rational method of canalizing hope and welding the community together.

The castaways do not seem to have been superstitious. They saw the effects in the sky of the American "rainbow bomb", exploded 2,800 miles to the north-east of them on 9th July 1962, and they knew what had happened and simply wished some Americans would chance to fly over Minerva Reef and spot them.

The prayer-meetings were occasions when the whole company, including the only non-churchgoer, Soakai, was assembled and after them, community affairs were discussed and settled. After the morning meeting, David divided the tasks for the day. Evening prayers were sometimes the occasion for confessions of stealing and anti-social behaviour, because all the men were very conscious of being in the hands of God who could not be deceived.

The experience, according to Ruhen, has had on the survivors a sobering effect and, on the whole, has increased their serious participation in religious practice now they are at home, with the solitary exception of the non-believer, the boxer Soakai. He said, "As to religion, it was all right on the reef: but there was a little too much of it to bring back into a more normal existence".

Muriel Bentley

### **Morality and Natural Law**

*Evolutionary Ethics*, by A. G. N. Flew. *New Studies in Ethics*, edited by W. D. Hudson. 8s. 6d. Macmillan, 1967.

*Aquinas and Natural Law*, by D. J. O'Connor. *New Studies in Ethics*, edited by W. D. Hudson. 8s. 6d. Macmillan, 1967.

Both these books deal with the notion of Natural Law. Antony Flew starts from a scientific point of view, and enquires whether the course of evolution discloses "a something not ourselves that makes for righteousness", as Sir Julian Huxley has suggested, and if not, whether any moral conclusions follow from Darwin's theory. D. J. O'Connor expounds the moral philosophy of St. Thomas, who started from a religious point of view and undertook to demonstrate that a universal moral code, the Law of Nature, can be established by purely logical argument.



The notion of Natural Law has a long history. The Stoics taught that one "should live according to Nature". But by Nature they meant Reason, and their precept really means that one should live rationally, which to them also meant morally. The Romans were prompted to accept the idea of a universal moral law, because of their experience in administering justice among people who were not citizens of the same state, and thus had no common system of law under which they could both claim rights. The Romans came to believe that there is a *ius gentium* (usually translated law of nations), which consists of basic principles of justice, that are common to all codes; they believed that this derives from the *consensus humani generis*, an agreed conviction of the human race, on principles which have been accepted, as a later writer put it, everywhere, at all times, by all men.

Later the Graeco-Roman idea of a universal moral law combined with the scientific concept of laws of nature. Natural Law now appeared to include in its scope both men and the world of nature. This enhances its appeal. In reading Hooker's *Ecclesiastical Polity*, for instance, it is difficult not to be swept along by the majesty of the argument that we are under the same government as the stars. ("Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong", Wordsworth wrote in his Ode to Duty.) The weak and fluctuating moral judgment of men seems to be underpinned by the sense of cosmic support. But, as Flew shows, there is in this version of the natural law a fatal ambiguity. What the scientist means by a law of nature is a *descriptive* statement of how natural processes *do* in fact go on. This has no connection with a *prescriptive* assertion, or moral imperative, as to how things *ought* to go on. There is in fact no possible inference from *is* to *ought*.

With this introduction we may turn to a consideration of the two books. Flew accepts that Darwin has conclusively shown that natural selection, by the struggle for existence, playing upon genetic mutations, has produced the different species of living things, and is still operative. He goes on to point out that this does not guarantee progress in any other sense than that those who survive in the struggle are the fittest to survive—"men who are wretched specimens, both mentally and physically may—and all too often do—kill superb animals; and genius has frequently been laid low by the activities of unicellular creatures having no wits at all" (p. 19). He goes on to argue that, since natural selection has produced the human race, rational or "artificial" selection, practised by human beings, is a continuation, not a contradiction, of natural selection. He also maintains that moral ideas have evolved and will evolve. Moreover the discovery that man can control the genetic inheritance of animals, and by implication of men, means that man now finds himself in control of the future course of

evolution, he has become "the business manager of the universe" in Huxley's phrase. Flew concludes that the evolution theory leaves no room for special creation or any other intervention. God can be found neither in sub-human levels of behaviour, as "a power not ourselves that makes for righteousness", as Sir Julian Huxley has suggested, using Matthew Arnold's phrase for his own purposes; nor at any other level, as a source of insight.

I would agree that the attempt to derive moral guidance from sub-human behaviour has been a failure. It has been tried and ran aground most obviously on the attempts to show that in the struggle for existence aggressive creatures win, or that co-operative, social creatures win. Mild vegetarian social animals and fierce nearly solitary carnivores can successfully co-exist in the same environment, as lions and zebras do. An even stronger argument is that there is clearly progress in moral ideas; for instance no self-righteous colonial administrator today would write to his chief, as Pliny did, to say "I realised that I must find out exactly what was going on, so I arrested two deaconesses and had them tortured". It does not follow that all later moral principles are higher than all early ones, but it does seem that no sure guidance can be extracted from primitive life.

But is this the same as saying that moral ideas have "evolved"? What can *evolve* mean in this context? If it is used in the Darwinian sense, as it should be, it should mean that some moral ideas have survival value, and that those groups of men who have held them have won; and that moral ideas which have no survival value have perished with those who held them. Which is not true. I suggest that all that "evolved" means here is that there has been change and progress in moral thinking; but this does *not* mean that moral ideas are simply the product of the hard struggle for existence.

Flew goes on to argue that the supremacy of man, and the supposed fact that moral ideas are the result of the struggle for existence together rule out the possibility that God exists. This seems unclear and unsatisfactory. He says (p. 29) that "a power not ourselves that makes for righteousness" could only be found "either 'outside' the universe in an old fashioned Divine Providence . . . or 'inside' the universe in absolute laws of historical development". Outside support "a something not ourselves" would entail "a Juggernaut view of history", and would imply that "any development determined by its laws is altogether outside human control". I find this all very difficult. We do constantly meet "something not ourselves that makes for righteousness", namely good people. The fact that they are not ourselves does not mean that they are quite alien to us or exercise absolute dominion over us; they exercise influence, precisely because so often our feelings respond to

theirs. It is of course part of Christian doctrine (at least in its non-Augustinian forms), that God exercises influence upon us in an analogous way; the pressure of the Holy Spirit can be felt, but it can be resisted. It is not at all obvious that if men are now in a position to control genetic inheritance, the influence of the Holy Spirit will be withheld when they make these dreadful decisions. Neither is it self-evident that the fact of the struggle for existence playing upon genetic mutations, excludes the possibility of special creation or revelation of moral truth. It is apparently a necessary working assumption of the biologist that every development of every species must be explained without recourse to the notion of God. But a working hypothesis is not the same as a self-evident truth.

Flew's conclusions as to the bearing of evolution on ethics are (i) that we ourselves have to take responsibility for moral judgment; neither the established facts of evolution nor the supposed facts of divine revelation can lift the burden of decision from human beings; (ii) there may be a "trend" towards morality at sub-human or primitive human levels, but if there is, it can have no authority; there has been progress in moral thinking, and the validity of ethical standards today cannot be affected by earlier levels; (iii) the fact of evolution, together with recent discoveries in genetics, immensely enlarges the scope and power of human decisions, and has in fact disclosed a cosmic context in which we have to act responsibly. The threat of Brave New World has become a reality. Thus the discovery of evolution enlarges the perspective within which human judgment has to act, and immeasurably adds to the burden of decision-making, but offers no support.

With these conclusions I do find myself in broad agreement. I am not convinced that there is no exaggeration in Huxley's assertion that "it is the human destiny to be the chief agent for the future of evolution on this planet". I do not know for instance whether we have yet discovered how to control the breeding of viruses, which might destroy us. But it does appear that we could interfere with the breeding of human beings so as to create human groups of greater or inferior intelligence, and this is terrifying. I am not convinced that there is no such thing as new moral insight springing from revelation. But if there is, it still must be our own responsibility to accept such insights, and human judgment in such matters is fallible.

D. J. O'Connor expounds with great lucidity the moral theory of St. Thomas and the logic and theory of knowledge with which it is bound up. He shows that the logic and theory of knowledge act as a kind of strait-jacket hampering the development of ethical theory, and preventing it from getting off the ground. One would desire a total

philosophy, in which all these aspects of experience and of thought could be seen to make a coherent pattern, and indeed for a long period it was believed that St. Thomas had achieved this. But the supremacy of logic as a source of knowledge does not today command assent.

The argument of St. Thomas runs: Man is a rational animal. Reason works in two spheres, theory and practice. Theoretical reason can obtain intellectual insight into the essences of things, and also argue deductively. Similarly practical reason can obtain intuitive insight into moral principles, and also argue from these to secondary precepts. Thus man can know his own essence; he knows himself as rational, and he knows the fundamental moral principles which are part of his rationality. These fundamental principles, and the precepts which can be derived from them, constitute Natural Law, the law which can be seen to be part of human nature, and thus universal. This system was developed by St. Thomas at length and with great subtlety. O'Connor subjects it to challenge.

He challenges the fundamental doctrine that human reason has intellectual insight, by intuition, into the essences of things, the basic structure that makes each thing the kind of thing it is. On the contrary, he would say the true structure of physical things becomes known by the long processes of empirical experiment and argument. He challenges the possibility of moral intuition, for several reasons, but especially (i) because St. Thomas exhibits this as an inference from *is* to *ought*, from the fact of our rationality to an obligation to act always rationally; and (ii) because St. Thomas is not successful, or not very successful, in establishing what the first principles are that can be intuited, nor how secondary precepts, which can provide guidance about right and wrong acts, can be derived from first principles. (iii) The concept of Natural Law fails for similar reasons; it deduces *ought* from *is*; it is too abstract. There are no universally accepted rules that can be got from it.

In general it appears to me that O'Connor has successfully shown that the attempt to deduce morals, and especially the Law of Nature, from logic will not work. But when he raises the question whether that is all that can be said for Natural Law, and concludes that there is very little value in the concept on any showing, I feel inclined to argue back.

(i) Whether or not intellectual intuition has a part to play in the work of the scientist, as Polanyi suggests it has, it would seem that by itself it does not suffice for knowledge; knowledge does have to be built up by experiment and argument. However that may be, it is not clear that there is no such thing as *moral* intuition. It is true that when philosophers like Sir David Ross expound the moral imperatives that appear self-evident to them, others do not find them self-evident. It seems in fact that whatever absolute pronouncements are made

concerning particular acts, such as that truth-telling is always right, or that stealing is always wrong, the critic will always find exceptional cases where the rule does not hold; so that the rules are not absolute after all. But it is not true that to be enlightening, moral insight *must* utter such precise injunctions. More general principles, which it is very hard to overthrow, can have significant content. Is it not impressive that so widely in human experience, I would say universally, it has been held that we *have duties* to each other? What the duties are, hospitality, respect for property and so on, varies from one culture to another, as is reasonable. But this does not mean that the principle that we have duties is empty. It means that we can never say to anyone: "You are a human being. I am a human being. I have *no* obligations to you". This amounts not to nothing but to a good deal. It is true that modern anthropologists have not confirmed the confidence of the Romans, that the *consensus humani generis* discloses a whole code of principles of justice, which can be applied to a vast number of cases. But on the other hand they have not brought to light any culture that holds that parents have no obligations to children nor children to parents nor friends to friends; and these obligations always consist in some form of caring for the welfare of the other. There does seem to be a prevailing agreement of the human race on some very general moral principles.

This consensus however does not produce answers to all our questions nor meet all our needs. We seem to need, for instance, a universal moral basis for international relations. And it can happen that when the argument from Natural Law is adduced most powerfully it can be most fallacious. An example of this is the Pope's tragic encyclical on birth-control. His constant appeal to Natural Law appears powerful because it contains the ambiguity of conflating scientific and moral law. If one asks "In what sense is it true that there is a law of nature concerning intercourse and conception?" The answer is "In a statistical sense". It is a biological *fact* that in very many instances conception follows intercourse. There is no valid inference from this to "Therefore conception *ought* not to be prevented from ensuing". The argument is in fact veering between the scientific and the moral meanings of the phrase "natural law" and this vitiates it.

There is a further comment that suggests itself. If there were a case for maintaining that the consent of the human race over many generations reveals a moral code concerning sex and procreation, this would not necessarily have absolute authority over us. There is no necessary moral authority in numbers. If Francis has been in a minority of one about how you ought to behave to a stinking blasphemous leper he would not have been wrong. Flew is right that there is progress in moral thinking. We have to be guided by our own judgment, not

necessarily by the generations of the past. Now there does seem to be in the twentieth century a new refinement of moral insights concerning personality. One of the side-effects of psychiatry has been the possibility of a new delicacy and depth of understanding, leading to greater sensitiveness in the giving and receiving of love. And in this, the sex love of man and wife has a great part to play, leading to the enhancement of personality and growth of love. To devalue individual personality, so that the growth of the capacity to love and the "comfort the one ought to have of the other" is subordinated to the production of unwanted babies is shocking.

Thus St. Thomas in the thirteenth century and Darwin in the nineteenth each created an impressive system, in which it seemed that man could find his place and see every aspect of his experience in its proper context. A great theory which offers such an overarching perspective, in which we can know where we are, and see the significance of our life, has a profound appeal. But it appears that each of these noble constructions is inadequate to contain and order the multi-dimensional variety of human experience, or to show us what we ought to do. Whether we feel equal to it or not, we have to stand on our own feet; we have to recognize areas of experience which resist absorption into any total philosophy that has yet been proposed, and this leaves us with tensions which have to be endured.

Mary Glover

# Sentences

Religion: Henry Vaughan

*My God, when I walk in those groves,  
And leaves thy spirit doth still fan,  
I see in each shade that there grows  
An angel talking with a man.*

*Under a juniper, some house,  
Or the cool myrtle's canopy,  
Others beneath an oak's green boughs,  
Or at some fountain's bubbling eye;*

*Here Jacob dreams, and wrestles; there  
Elias by a raven is fed,  
Another time by th' angel, where  
He brings him water with his bread;*

*In Abr'ham's tent the winged guests  
(O how familiar then was heaven!)  
Eat, drink, discourse, sit down, and rest  
Until the cool and shady even;*

*Nay thou thyself, my God, in fire,  
Whirlwinds, and clouds, and the soft voice  
Speak'st there so much, that I admire  
We have no confrence in these days;*

*Is the truce broke? or 'cause we have  
A mediator now with thee,  
Dost thou therefore old treaties waive  
And by appeals from him decree?*

*Or is't so, as some green heads say  
That now all miracles must cease?  
Though thou hast promis'd they should stay  
The tokens of the Church, and peace;*

*No, no; religion is a spring  
That from some secret, golden mine  
Derives her birth, and thence doth bring  
Cordials in every drop, and wine;*

*But in her long, and hidden course  
Passing through the earth's dark veins,  
Grows still from better unto worse,  
And both her taste, and colour stains,*

*Then drilling on, learns to increase  
False echoes, and confused sounds,  
And unawares doth often seize  
On veins of sulphur under ground;*

*So poison'd, breaks forth in some clime,  
And at first sight doth many please,  
But drunk, is puddle, or mere slime  
And 'stead of physic, a disease;*

*Just such a tainted sink we have  
Like that Samaritan's dead well,  
Nor must we for the kernel crave  
Because most voices like the shell*

*Heal then these waters, Lord; or bring thy flock,  
Since these are troubled, to the springing rock,  
Look down great Master of the feast; O shine,  
And turn once more our water into wine!*



## NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

**Robert Thouless** has retired from being Reader in Educational Psychology in the University of Cambridge. He is a past President of the British Psychological Society and of the Society for Psychical Research, author of *Straight and Crooked Thinking*, *Introduction to the Psychology of Religion*, and numerous papers.

**Matthew Shaw** is a member of the Society of the Sacred Mission, and prior of St. Paul's Priory, Quernmore, Lancaster. He read Moral Sciences at Cambridge and has been philosophy tutor both at Kelham and at the S.S.M. house in Australia, and is part-time lecturer at St. Martin's College, Lancaster.

**Richard Braithwaite** has retired from being Knightbridge Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Cambridge. He is the author of *Scientific Explanation* (1953) and of *An Empiricist's View of the Nature of Religious Belief* (1955).

**Sister Emily (Emily Sparrow)** was a member of the Community of the Epiphany, Truro. Professed in 1915, she was Novice Mistress from 1945 to 1957, and died in 1958.

**William Thorpe** is Professor of Animal Ethology in the University of Cambridge, and Director of the Sub-Department of Animal Behaviour. Fellow of Jesus College, where he was formerly Tutor and Senior Tutor.

**Martin Richards** is a Zoologist interested in problems of behaviour. He started research on rodents but more recently has begun work on human development in the Unit for Research on Medical Applications of Psychology in Cambridge University. He is a Fellow of Trinity College.

**Tom Heron** founded the business of Cresta Silks Ltd., and was its managing director until his retirement in 1950. For some years during the war he acted as Advisor to the Board of Trade in connection with its utility clothing problem. He has been a member of the "Frontier Council" since its inception. He has always taken an amateur's interest in the arts, theology and sociology. His poem *Peacock Science* was printed in *T. to T.*, Vol. 1, 2nd quarter.

**Gerald Thatcher** was born in Saskatchewan, Canada, worked on Madison Avenue in the advertising business for several years until he quit and joined the staff of Esalen Institute in Big Sur, as Director of Esalen Publications. He has privately published several books of verse and is currently working on an extended piece of didactic prose.

**John Bleibtreu** was born in 1926 in New York City. His education was interrupted by service in the U.S. Navy in World War II and was resumed thereafter. After receiving a B.S. in Business Administration from the University of Pennsylvania, he worked as a stock broker on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange for 12 years, retiring in 1961 in order to be able to read and write at leisure. He now lives in Big Sur, California.

**Dorothy Emmet** was formerly Professor of Philosophy in the University of Manchester. Author of *The Nature of Metaphysical Thinking; Function Purpose and Powers; Rules, Roles and Relations*. Honorary Fellow of Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford, and Fellow of Lucy Cavendish College, Cambridge.

**Merfyn Turner** has been a prison visitor for over twenty years. He left work at the Maudsley Hospital in 1953 to set up Norman House, a house in London for the after-care of discharged prisoners. Two further such houses have now been opened. Author of *Safe Lodging*, *Forgotten Men* (an enquiry into a common lodging house), and *A Pretty Sort of Prison*. His wife is a former barrister and they have five children.

**Maurice Claydon** left school at 13 and ran away from home at 16. He worked in tin mines, and is now a self-taught craftsman carpenter. He has three children.

**Mary Beasley**: 3rd year ("mature") student at Leicester University reading Sociology. Formerly a research assistant at the Cambridge Language Research Unit, later moved to Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, while waiting to get into university, and spent most of the time in broadcasting.

**Muriel Bentley** has taught English at Achimota College, Ghana; at the University of Cape Coast, Ghana; and at Bishop Lonsdale College of Education, Derby. She is about to marry the warden-elect of a theological college in Melanesia and go to live in which otherwise appears to be a desert South Sea island.

**Mary Glover**, after reading Greats at Somerville College, Oxford, was a tutor in classics and philosophy at St. Hugh's College, Oxford until 1940. She was then seconded into industrial work, and developed an interest in social administration which she has pursued ever since. She was Director of Social Service at Keele University from 1950 to 1965, and is now retired and living in Cambridge.

**Marcus Parker-Rhodes**, who designed the cover, is a student at Guildford College of Design who is trying to be a graphic artist, but, having no faith in the magic that surrounds the painter and sculptor, is looking for a job rather than a way to perfection.

**Thomas Merton** read modern languages at Clare College, Cambridge and did graduate work at Columbia University. He joined the Cistercian (Trappist) Order in 1941 and spent the rest of his life at the Abbey of Gethsemani, Kentucky, where he was ordained priest in 1949, and became master of novices at the abbey. He wrote many books on contemplation, and his latest work dealt with Mahatma Gandhi and the philosophy of non-violence.





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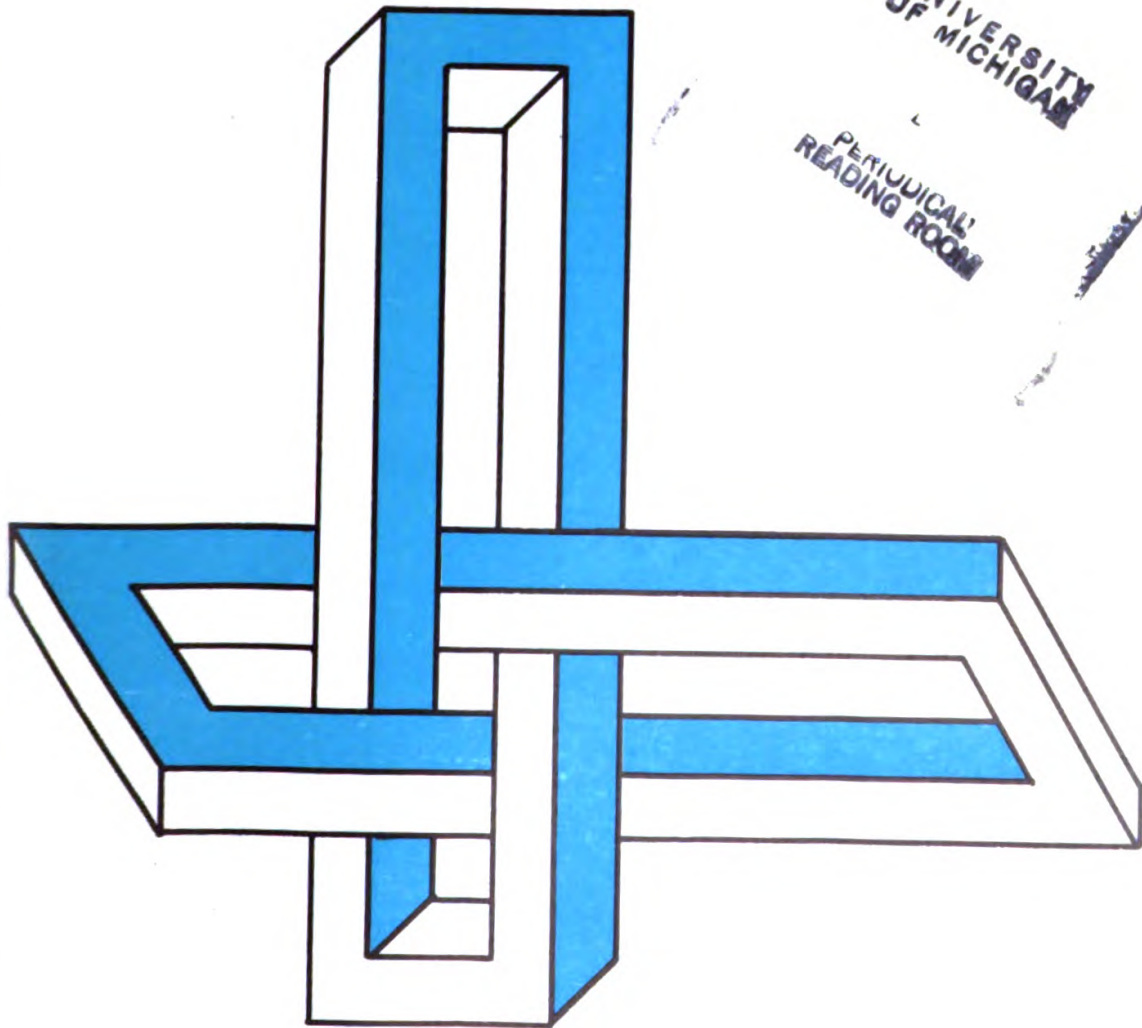
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# Theoria to Theory

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# THEORIA TO THEORY



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# THEORIA TO THEORY

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# Editorial

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This Editorial is the third of a series on religious groups, (churches); and within this, the second part of an analysis of the nature of religious authority.

In the last Editorial we talked about the *attractive power* of religious authority, and also about the *persuasive power* of religious authority. The attractive power, we said was due to the fact that true religious authority was secular authority in reverse: "I am among you as he that serveth". (Actual examples of religious authority thus truly exercised though, were hard to find.) The persuasive power of religious authority was due to the fact that preacher and hearer, exhorter and exhorted, shared a common and agreed philosophical or colloquial language; that they could draw on a common, taken for granted, stock of concepts. This common language, we said, no longer exists in our civilisation; therefore the persuasive power of religious authority, in this century, has almost totally broken down.

But now, what about the *coercive power* of religious authority? Any discussion of the nature of religious authority which ignores its claim to be, on occasion, coercive does not grasp the nettle of really trying to find out what religious authority is like: for it is precisely its acts of coercion which have caused the scandal. Joan of Arc is handed over to the English to be burnt at the stake; Jesus of Nazareth is handed over by the Jews to the Romans to be crucified, the Sufi Hallaj is publicly mutilated and then beheaded; and so on and so on, through a very long list indeed. And conscience cries out against this: in each case, and for centuries afterwards, such executions, however legal in terms of the culture within which they were perpetrated, are thought to have been ultimate human crimes. What are we to think about this?

Moreover, there are lesser versions of such crimes, acts of religious coercion which, it is felt, cause great suffering and cultural and personal damage, though they do not inflict death. Such acts are: prohibition against reading certain books: prohibition against pursuing certain speculations: prohibition against using contraception to limit procreation: prohibition to lay members of the group against taking any initiative or authority; and so on, and so on. What are we to think about these? Are we to say, for instance, that unless such acts are persuasive and attractive, we will have none of them? This suggestion would seem attractive to humanists at first sight, in that according to it, we define coercive religious authority in a Protestant manner, in terms

of persuasive and attractive religious authority only, but a moment's reflection shows that it won't do. And it won't do for one philosophic reason and one highly sinister reason. The philosophic reason is that coercion, morally speaking, just cannot be defined in terms of attractiveness and persuasiveness; notoriously tyrants can kill, but they cannot attract or persuade. The sinister reason is that, speaking now sociologically, spectacular acts of religious coercion (like all public executions and all ritual sacrifices) are highly relished by the populace of the culture within which they occur; nothing is more compulsive reading than an account of a hanging. It could therefore be said that, over the short run, they do indeed have persuasive and attractive value – though this attraction and persuasiveness usually ricochets back against their perpetrators – “O dear”, (we feel) “how complicated this whole subject is; must we purchase catharsis only at the cost of committing crime?”

The truth is that there is a simplifying insight here which we have failed to get at; an insight which may not explain everything, but which does explain something. This insight is that the coercive power of religious authority is not an extension of the power of the ruler: it is an extension of the power of the teacher, i.e. of the school teacher, or the university lecturer. Behind every religious persecution, behind every inquisition, there is a University don who says “I don't care, I am not going to alter my lectures”. You self-satisfied, lazy consultancy-taking, timid dons, you are at the heart of this evil: not the judiciary, not the lawyers, not the civic authorities, not the police. (It is student power, therefore, which has an inkling of the truth on this matter, far more than the members of the Council of Civil Liberties.) The judiciary and the police (the secular power) are of course normally the instruments for carrying out acts of religious coercion: but it is the ecclesiastical dons and spiritual school teachers who are the ultimate agents of them. Student power's way of bringing this fact to light is by making such remarks as “Nearly every Professor is a Fascist under the skin”; and though of course this is grossly false, yet – face it – we instantly see what is meant. It is a spiritual remark, and not a social one, it pinpoints the outraged squeal, and spite, of the teacher who can't get himself listened to. And why can't he get himself listened to? Because he is either only an usher, or an organiser. Because he has not anything worthwhile to give or to say.

Now – having seen this (academic readers are expected only to see it, not to agree with it) we are at once in a position to do a great deal more analysing. The public, law-enforced acts of religious coercion are only *secondary*; they occur because the ecclesiastical teachers, in any

culture, have succeeded in getting the law behind them to enforce their teaching. (Thus Protestant Bibles are still dangerous reading in some parts of Spain.) This power of enforcing an ecclesiastically-approved body of wisdom by force still exists in some religious cultures, and *mutatis mutandis*, also in some communist cultures; but it is weakening with the failure of the persuasive power of religious authority. It is done (quoting from student power again) exercising coercion by examination or by grant giving who are the oppressors now.

So, there are two things to discuss. First, is there a general nature of the teaching magisterium which ought to carry authority? Second, is there a legitimate religious form of it: i.e. is there a genuine body of contemplative or mystical knowledge, in any religion, which justifies the Guru's, the Master's claim that he needs to be able to exercise coercive authority over his disciple in order to impart it?

These two things are interconnected. And it has got to be faced that if the answer to the first is "Yes, if difficult subjects like mathematics and music are to be learnt, there has got to be some degree of discipline to which the pupil must be subjected to enable him to learn them"; and if the answer to the second is also "Yes; there is a genuine body of very deep religious contemplative knowledge which can transform the whole personality if the discipline succeeds in learning it, but this knowledge is even more difficult to learn than music or mathematics" – if all this, then the agents of would-be coercive religions, such as Catholicism, are more clumsy or inappropriate in what they are doing than sinful. In fact, in one way, they are not sinful at all, since (in contrast with the Sunyasin of Hinduism) they are trying to make this mystical knowledge accessible to everybody; they are, in a special sense of the words, mystically democratic.

But it all turns on whether the claim to have something really worth teaching is justified.

This question will be discussed next time.

\* \* \*

We have not been able to publish a dialogue this time. One was prepared on teleological and mechanistic ways of thinking about organisms but it was done at very short notice (our fault) and is not yet finished. We think it is better to keep it and try to get it developed to see if some constructive possibility may appear beyond the impasse of a clash of views. In its place we are publishing an investigation by Donald Broadbent of the difficulties which occur when you try to use ordinary language in experimental psychology. In this he uses an information model of the brain, in one of the many senses of "information". We are

also publishing an article by Dick Joyce and Ron Welldon. The latter works at St. Christopher's Hospice in East London. Here are some sentences from a letter on the Euthanasia controversy from the Hospice which appeared in *The Times* of 27th March:

"In fact few patients ever ask for euthanasia – it is their relatives who may occasionally seek it for them; most patients cling to life and do not want death. An apparent request may well be a cry for a quite different kind of help or a symptom of a depressive illness which can be treated. The young and healthy may think that dependence and helplessness is degrading. We do not know how we would feel when we get there nor the value of the help and kindness we will discover.

We work at St. Christopher's Hospice which was mentioned by Mr. St. John-Stevas. Our work brings us into daily contact with patients who come to us in physical, emotional and spiritual distress, which we are able to relieve. We are a mixed community and by no means are all our patients dying.

"Our objective is to enable all our patients to live as fully as possible, and, if it is inevitable, to die with peace and dignity as themselves".

\* \* \*

We regret the irregularity in the timing of our issues, and are negotiating over this.

# Report on the Response to Circular Letters to Subscribers

---

The circular letter sent out to subscribers and lapsed subscribers before Christmas brought an interesting batch of replies. We had 150 answers – about 18 per cent. of the total number circulated which we are told is quite a good percentage for circulars. The letters showed how many different kinds of people all over the world have a concern for *Theoria to Theory* and say that it is discussing what they want discussed, and this encourages us. Where these letters made comments or asked questions which called for individual replies we have tried to answer them. We want to thank the others who wrote; they will, we hope, understand that it has not been possible to write to everyone personally.

The main reasons given for drop-outs were (a) inadvertance in sending a renewed subscription, and this, it was generally said, was now being rectified; (b) in some cases “Not my cup of tea”: fair enough; (c) pressure of other reading, and not sufficient time or interest in *Theoria to Theory* to give it priority; (d) a few still say that we are too “in-group”. There is a problem here. On the one hand there has to be a face-to-face group behind an enterprise of this kind to discuss what should be done and to generate the energy and courage to do it. On the other hand, such a group is likely to produce a certain amount of in-group language, and other people may feel excluded. The journal would become diffuse and then not survive without a group behind it; at the same time we are getting an increasing range of contributors who see what it is after and are writing for us.

A number of people sent suggestions for topics. These have been listed, and we hope to take some of them up when we can do so properly. This of course cannot be done in a snap way. It means finding people with the relevant knowledge, interests, and time to go into them and write about them.

We are also grateful for the names which were sent of people who might be interested in *Theoria to Theory*. A specimen number with a covering letter has been sent to each of these. A letter from the person who proposed the name might be an encouragement to subscribe. We can supply those who signified an interest in a local group with the names of other subscribers in their area.

The extra-mural department of the University of Manchester is organizing a week-end on *Theoria to Theory* at their college, Holly



Royde, from 5th–6th July. This will be an opportunity for some of the readers of the journal and some of the editorial group to meet each other. A notice is being sent to all those who answered our circular. If any other readers would be particularly interested in this, will they write to Mr. Caradoc Jones, Department of Extra-Mural Studies, The University of Manchester, Manchester 13. The numbers will, however, have to be limited to about 30.

\* \* \*

We are printing a selection of extracts quoted by permission from correspondents who made points we thought would be of interest to readers generally.

From A. J. M. Virgin (Lincoln):

“The subjects covered were very much my ‘cup of tea’ but I found the ‘in-group’ tone claustrophobic and exacerbated by Christian-name-dropping, weird poetry and occasional articles printed without benefit of punctuation, though no doubt with heightened significance. Sorry – *non tali auxilio!* But at least yours sincerely, Alun J. M. Virgin”.

From Geoffrey Heawood (Sussex):

“The two areas which I would like to see taken further are:—

- (a) the relation of Theology to Experience; I mean there is Islamic mysticism, Jewish mysticism and Christian mysticism (with a vast variety of theology to ‘explain’ and ‘foster’ it). I suppose that Radthakrishnan would say they are all the same – it is a personal matter. Is it? . . .
- (b) What is the nature of real religious education? It tends to be dogged *either* by starting with the assumption that the Bible must be studied. O.K. You then get good Bible results – but not necessarily religion; or am I wrong? *Or* so-called ‘religious education’ is really concerned to inculcate (I would use that word rather than ‘indoctrinate’) the ways of thought and practice of a particular denomination. *Or* we experiment (as I have done?) and remain a trifle puzzled. One can never start from scratch. Neither pupil nor teacher are *tabulae rasae*”.

From Arthur Bell (Alberta):

“I appreciate your concern, and up here in the bush, where the population is predominantly Cree, *Theoria to Theory* is a refreshing

stimulus; this is in a world where one is trying to approach life with death from the beginning again, so that the muddle of the situation can be unravelled. One generation covers the step from the old stone age to modern industry.

“We are all embedded in our systems of thought. Is it humanly possible to extricate ourselves, to see that the way we think, as products of ‘Western Schools’ is just one of many approaches to life-death? Although ‘European’ philosophy has stimulated much development in research into many subjects it is in danger of smothering some systems of thought which have their advantages and may offer clues to the dilemma found in the discussion.

“Topics. The field of communication, in particular, language. Forms of expression surely reflect the person, reflecting the patterns of thought. It would be good to hear from a linguist who has experience of languages quite outside the thought-system of our education. But this may be a dream, for that would be the achievement of a life-time in its fulness. My brief experience of 14 months up here, in the muskeg forests, has revealed one great need; the need to approach the local language by stepping right outside our radically different Indo-European systems”.

From Mrs. Pitt (Surrey):

“I only understand *some* of *T. to T.*, but find my children and their friends quite interested to read any copies I leave about”.

From Roger Thomas (Hibbert Trust):

“I like . . . the idea of live dialogues, though sometimes a little more (polite) brutality on the part of the participants wouldn’t hurt. I hope you won’t drop into the practice of just printing contributed articles like most other journals”.

From Ralph Morton (Glasgow):

“Thanks for your letter of enquiry about *Theoria to Theory*. It gives me the opportunity of saying how stimulating I find it. I should really add the words ‘in parts’, for there are parts which I, who am no scientist, cannot understand at all. However I find sufficient reward in what I do understand. Above all, I appreciate the purpose of trying to understand religious experience in a scientific way. The articles are often extremely illuminating. I particularly appreciate the way the point is often illustrated in very human articles, very simply written, I should also add how helpful I find the editorials. . . . I suppose one

looks for what one should be finding out for oneself. I am engaged at the moment in trying to think out how we should regard Jesus today. All the conventional titles seem inadequate. *T. to T.* has helped me a lot in my thinking, for it is dealing with the fundamental question of the place of persons in this world. But I am looking for more”.

From Michael Paton (Sheffield):

“Why didn’t I find it (*T. to T.*) live up to expectations? I think partly because bits of it are just too difficult for me, tho’ tantalizing (e.g. Margaret Masterman). Partly because I tired of the ‘in-group’ atmosphere, as I did my philosophy under Austin! maybe I’d have fared differently if your contributors had been people like Dick Hare and Crombie and Ryle and Tony Flew and David Jenkins but I doubt if they would have produced the kind of set-up you wanted. . . . It’s the assumption of friends chatting together that doesn’t come off; I thought it might; but in fact communication is more difficult than that. . . . Concrete poems: *jeu d’esprit*, but rubbish really, aren’t they? I looked at them with some interest but doubt whether they amount to anything at all – just the kind of theoretical production which brings academic work into disrepute. . . . I think I’d prefer more gathering of evidence and less spinning of theories. But that belies the name of your journal.

“So I think I must just hope that when your discussions have got somewhere you will publish them and I will then certainly read them; I think your initiative is excellent, it is just that I am not a scratch player”.

From John Byrom (Warden of Brasted Place College, Kent):

“About topics. Your Dialogue about Spirit in the last number, which I am just reading, prompts me to suggest that you might extend this line, if it hasn’t been done already, to the interesting question of the relationship between religion and psychiatry, which I personally have never seen properly thrashed out. The connexion between the Dialogue this quarter, and the subject I suggest, is contained in the rather telling remark of Carl Weizsäcker, ‘good physics is broad enough to contain life’. Is good (secular) psychiatry broad enough to contain (openings on to) the attraction of spirit?”

“Lastly let me say that tho’ I have an inbuilt dislike of putting down regular reading to take up periodicals, I am usually glad when I have done so. Two articles so far have really stuck in my mind, an early one on the Sub-assembly theory of the mind, and a later one by Margaret Mastermon on telepathy, and the honesty with which she said of the

Russians' laboratory proofs, that this was the worst thing that had happened for scientists for the last 100 years”.

From R. A. Nelson (Dublin):

“Since the first number of *T. to T.* I have wanted to say how stimulating and intellectually enriching I have found it to be. For me at any rate *T. to T.* fills a place in the religious-scientific field which no other production does in the same way. I am particularly grateful for your openness and your ‘concern with topics that have not yet been brought within the purview of the established sciences but which might become established landmarks of human understanding before very long if the right way to approach them could be found’. I realised when your first number appeared that this was something for which I had been searching for a considerable time”.

From Mrs. Mann (Cheshire):

“I am now beginning to think that the way forward for the mixed and mobile populations of today is not through physically local groups, but through newly apprehended and recognised directions or wave-lengths, which are constantly and universally being synthesized and re-synthesized. These streams can only be identified, amplified and put up by publications such as yours, and other media of communication, such as Radio, TV, etc. Merely verbal exchange and encounter in local groups seem to me at the moment very limited in their fruitfulness, *unless* they are able to draw life-blood from a common participatory ritual, which reflects a shared religious commitment – this of course is quite ‘out’ today and most of us seem proud of it – yet without it these sorts of meetings simply end in everyone arguing about his or her special political or social ‘hobby-horse’ (especially the younger males!), and the intent towards oneness of purpose is dissipated and lost. Unless united by a felt impact of the ultra-human (given impetus by poetry, worship, songs, etc.) everyone, except the under-18s, sees the world as before, from his individual standpoint, and will not budge an inch, unless knocked off – in which case he merely climbs back into his original position as soon as he can! The exchange of ideas seems to make more real progress somehow through the medium of indirect contact (art, magazines, films, music), where people feel more pliable and unafraid of exposure or openness – less self-conscious.

“I do really feel that your journal is, potentially, one *most* deserving world-wide circulation, and could easily become a sort of base-camp,

for entry into the spiritual transit of one's choice – or even a vehicle of hope itself for the many wanderers of 'no-fixed-abode' and also for all seekers, old and new, of the Universal 'Omega-point'. The present need for a 'living-space on wheels' or a community that exists only on paper (but within the Noosphere) is very real – I think perhaps that women, especially mothers, suffer most from the lack of it, as Blake was fond of pointing out. It is the longing for a tangible organ of contact and acceptance which keeps on slowing up our identity of direction, and current of fulfilment, which we know to be truly ourselves. The Churches used to fill this void”.

# From “The Third Killer”

*Guy Wint*

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*(Guy Wint, one of the closest collaborators in Theoria to Theory died of a stroke on 7th January. He had had a previous stroke in 1960 and made a creative use of the physical and mental horror this produced by writing a notable book The Third Killer. We are publishing some extracts from this as his memorial, with the permission of Freda Wint and the publisher, Chatto and Windus.)*

“I found that there were two worlds. The world of public time, in which I had been previously accustomed to live, and the private world of time, or of timelessness, in which increasingly I spent my life, and of which I became almost a citizen. In this private world the time measurements were altogether erratic. Time was telescoped and time was elongated. I had of course come on the traces of this happening beforehand, but in the days when the public world was paramount these private entities of time were evened out and corrected by the time sequence in the public world. Now the private sequences seemed of more account.

“In my world of private time, things happened on a different scale, and obeyed a different logic, to that of the world of public time. Everybody will find this true in some measure of himself, though most people, in the competitive circumstances of the world, are too busy to give licence to their private time scale, and to explore it. I had always had the habit of seeing, by a kind of imaginative discipline, my friends, not simply as they are at the moment – that is, at the moment of public time – but at different periods of their development, as children, in their middle age, in their old age, and at the hour of their death. This was by an active thought. But now, in my sick state of mind, which trembled on the verge of hallucination, I had, or thought I had, more direct awareness. My world of private time did not keep all beings in a regular, ordered state of advance. Rather it singled out certain people, and raced them through their life history, enabling me to see them, as in addition I saw myself, at different phases”.

\* \* \*

“As time went on I became ever more sharply aware of the difference between my personality as it had been rendered by the

stroke, and the self within, the censorious, unimpaired, intelligent self, equipped with its wide range of memory, the self which seemed to have emerged from the stroke comparatively undamaged. But damage was the word which came to one's mind in contemplating the self which one presented to the outer world. How wretched this was, what a chaotic wreck it had become, how it stammered and stuttered, how it was unable to express the simplest thoughts, how much time it wasted in contriving a code of communication with the normal world all around it, how it was failing at everything physical, and at the translation of the mental into physical terms – of these facts I was all too conscious. But I was conscious of them through the withdrawn self, the self which was hardly changed, which was as receptive and critical as ever, and which was, I hoped, my real personality. But what was the use of this when that personality could not express itself and expression was in the hands of a machine which was obviously broken, still ticking but running down like a child's toy?"

\* \* \*

“On the whole Christianity, whatever its merits, is a less satisfactory religion [than Buddhism] to equip one for the experience of crippling illness; or at least Christianity as it is now practised in the west. Christianity is a highly variable religion. It is possible to think of, and even to study among its various forms at different times, a Christianity of a more introverted, individual patient, contemplative kind. This is the kind of Christianity known to the Carthusians; the life of benevolent action of the western type seems as pointless to the devout Carthusian as it does to the Buddhist initiate. The strict rule of the Carthusians enjoins a constant meditation upon death as the best way of spending one's life. Out of this it is possible to imagine a faith which can welcome the torments of disease, and dwell on each one and see it as a nail which joins man in a common crucifixion with Christ. From that there would come the transportation and bliss in which the ordinary discomforts of life are swallowed up.

“But for those who find their salvation in working with their fellow men, this is not the way. Indeed, they are inclined to regard it as a kind of self-deception and selfishness. They see no merit in the elaborate intellectual exercise which it implies. By the facts of their nature they cannot disengage themselves from the preoccupation of the world; and it is hard to say they should. On all sides, Christianity of the twentieth century teaches them that they should not. And so their instinct is to be up and doing. Christianity is essentially a religion for man in society, teaching him a way of salvation which he can attain only by living a

social life; its values are selflessness, devotion to his fellow-beings, self-sacrifice, and joy in the joy of others. A community is required for the individual soul to prosper.

“Here the teaching of the religion collides with the fact of the experience of the disabled. Christianity urges effort, but what does it say to people for whom it is out of the question? For those who, like many stroke patients, lie immobilized and who, by medical advice, are best left to vegetate, to urge upon such the essentially communal life of Christianity is a mockery. Of course, some effort is always possible – to practise fortitude, cheerfulness and so on – and it is most desirable that it should be made, but a religion which makes effort the centre is apt to be regarded as a mockery by the disabled. The task is to distil matter for those who are compelled to sit and watch the world go round.

“Probably the best which they can hope for is to find a precarious satisfaction in the life going on all around. They are like the ancient mariner: they will recover health, spiritual but not material, when they are able to look on creatures in all their forms and bless them unawares: simply to do that may be enough. It is extravagant that a chronically sick man should be expected to do anything particular, besides being reasonably cheerful, to advance the world’s welfare. . . .

“Though Christianity may thus have little comfort to offer to the disabled person, he will be well advised to suffer his disability among Christian people. Who would prefer the aloof, abstract benevolence of Buddhists to the more genuine and immediate sentiment of Christian nurses? They show compassion, they are human and understandable; to be on level terms with them it is not necessary to twist facts in an improbable way. For one who is obliged to be chiefly at the receiving and not the doing end of life, Christianity supplies the best environment”.

\* \* \*

“I was conscious all the time of a certain disapproval of society. If society was irrational the situation was absurd. Too great a strain was put upon it – upon this society which is busy, competitive, worried, always reaching towards the new. Not that society would not bestir itself, and move heaven and earth to help, if help were available and it knew what to do. But the world is embarrassed by stroke patients; it can do nothing. The plight and behaviour of the stricken get on its nerves, and it is feverishly inclined to blame them for what it knows they cannot help. Compassion is a wasting asset: nor indeed is it



healthy, either for the giver or the receiver, for it to be too continuously in evidence”.

\* \* \*

“Metaphysics can give some comfort. If one retains the power of seeing one’s own deterioration, is there not hope that the part of the mind which perceives this is itself unaffected by the deterioration which has so evidently set in of the part which is seen? The agent which sees may in some ways be independent of the vicissitudes of the mind in the world of time. Even the slowness and indifference of the mind, of which I am so painfully conscious, seems to give way at times, suddenly and fitfully, and for shockingly brief periods, to the exercise of the mind as I once knew it. I should like to think it does, and derive some comfort from the idea of a self which goes on regardless of strokes or of a hardening of the arteries”.

# The Objective Efficacy of Prayer— A Double-Blind Clinical Trial\*

*Dick Joyce and Ron Welldon*

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“It is asserted by some, that men possess the faculty of obtaining results over which they have little or no direct personal control, by means of devout and earnest prayer, while others doubt the truth of this assertion. The question regards a matter of fact, that has to be determined by observation and not by authority; and it is one that appears to be a very suitable topic for statistical inquiry . . . Are prayers answered or are they not? . . . Do sick persons who pray or are prayed for, recover on average more rapidly than others?”

Francis Galton (1883).

The main title of this paper is that of the chapter in Galton’s work from which the quotation is taken. In what is probably the first epidemiological survey in the field of “paranormal healing”, Galton compares the life-expectancy rates for prayerful people, such as divines, and materialistic people, such as doctors and lawyers. From such evidence and from the fact that sovereigns, whom he regarded as a much-prayed-for category, appear to be the shortest-lived occupational group, he concluded that prayer does not seem to bring about temporal benefits. One of the present authors agrees with this proposition; the other does not.

Many, both before and after Galton [1], have written on the subject of healing by prayer, and many claims of miraculous healing have been made. But the evidence for the whole spectrum of so-called “para-normal healing”, even when presented by members of the medical profession such as that by the special committee of the council of the British Medical Association to the Archbishops’ Commission on Divine Healing, is “uncritical, biased and unsatisfactory as medical evidence” [2]. The committee reported: “We can find no evidence that there is any type of illness cured by ‘spiritual healing’ alone which could not have been cured by medical treatment”. The Archbishops’

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Commission itself concluded: "Scientific testing can be a valuable corrective of rash claims that healing, ordinary or extraordinary, has occurred and it may bring to light natural healing virtues in religious rites; but it is idle for the Church, or anyone else, to appeal to science to prove the reality of supernatural power or the truth of theology or metaphysic". [3] A retrospective assessment of the medical evidence concerning one hundred claims of healing made by a particular spiritualist healer has already concluded that there was no satisfactory evidence of organic healing [4]. But little attempt has yet been made to take Galton and the Archbishops seriously and to apply "statistical enquiry" to the results of prayer for healing that can be assessed medically: although other effects of prayer, as for instance upon the growth of plants [5], have been investigated in this way.

If physical and mental effects do indeed occur as a result of intercessory prayer, it should be possible to assess these and to establish their clinical and statistical significance in a similar way to that for any medical form of treatment. Such an attempt itself neither affirms nor denies that other effects of intercessory prayer occur to which scientific and statistical criteria are not applicable. Refusal to apply modern methods of assessment to a potential form of therapy on the grounds that it is not a conventional medical treatment replaces scientific objectivity with medical trade unionism. Objection to prayer being evaluated in such a way on the grounds that this is to "tempt God" (so risking the withdrawal of divine support in displeasure) confuses the spiritual act of prayer with its physical and mental consequences. Either attitude may also arise from separating a water-tight religious compartment in which an image of God heals magically by prayer from a strictly medical compartment in which the healing depends upon man's own intellect and energies.

The conditions of scientific and statistical enquiry may be inimical to the observation of this kind of healing: that is to say, the tools of assessment may not only be too insensitive to demonstrate the therapeutic media, but they may actually interfere with the therapy. This is possible, but such a possibility is not a sufficient reason for failing to make the observations. No human enquiry gives unequivocal answers, and a positive result is logically no more and no less conclusive than a negative one.

### *Methods*

Forty-eight patients suffering from chronic stationary or progressively deteriorating psychological or rheumatic disease in two out-patient clinics at the London Hospital were selected for inclusion in

the trial. Four physicians were concerned: with one exception the same physician examined a particular patient at the start and at the end of the trial, and on both occasions completed the brief evaluation forms (Appendix II). At no time did he know whether the patient was allocated to the "treatment" or control group.

Patients seen as nearly as possible on the same day were matched in pairs by one of us (C.R.B.J.) as closely as possible for sex, age, and primary clinical diagnosis. More than half of the 19 pairs who could be matched for these variables also matched for marital status and religious faith (Tables 1 and 2). The rather slow rate of admission to the trial – an indication for the use of such "sequential" procedures – in fact made this procedure less perfect than was desirable, but a tolerable match was obtained. (In fact, even totally random matching would have been acceptable.) One member of each pair was allocated to "treatment" by the spin of a coin. Patients were not told that they were taking part in a trial, and the appropriate medical treatment was given or continued uninterruptedly in all cases. At the end of six months reminders were sent to the physician responsible, who in due course re-examined the patient concerned, and completed the second evaluation form. Owing to holidays and other administrative difficulties the interval between the first and second examinations of at least one member of each pair was in fact always more than eight months. From the special evaluation forms short abstracts in non-technical language (Appendix I) about patients receiving "treatment" were sent to the leader of a prayer-group. These abstracts referred to each patient only by his first name and a fictitious initial so that the possibility of actual identification of a patient by a prayer-group, as undesirable for ethical as for experimental reasons, was reduced to a minimum.

The six prayer-groups consisted of five organized by the Guild of Health and one by the Friends' Spiritual Healing Fellowship. The former is an interdenominational body concerned with promoting Christian healing, and the latter a Quaker group with the same aims. Both are represented on the Churches' Council of Healing. Twenty-four groups scattered throughout Great Britain offered to take part in the experiment in response to requests for their co-operation published in appropriate periodicals, and the first listed alphabetically by the surname of the group leader, and fulfilling two conditions, were chosen. The two conditions were: willingness to accept up to six names, and residence more than thirty miles from the London Hospital (to lessen still further the very slight chance of any physical contact with or actual knowledge of the patient by the prayer-group). The prayer-groups agreed to expect no further news of the patients for

whom they prayed until the termination of the trial, which, they were told, was expected to last for six months. Each group was later asked to submit details of its membership and to outline its own method of intercession.

A total of 19 people were involved in prayer, two as lone individuals, and the rest in four groups which met as often as once every two weeks for sessions of up to an hour. Most work was done individually and every day, generally at no fixed time but involving about 15 min. per day. At a conservative estimate of 5 min. spent per patient per day by each group member, each patient received a total of 15 hrs. of prayer during the minimum treatment period of six months. The prayer was in each case based upon a method of silent meditation, which has been practised for centuries in the Church. Here the emphasis is not on words or petitions but the gradual development of a disciplined silence in which the meditator attempts to still his own thoughts or at first completely to disregard them and to focus his whole attention upon a short sentence – often from the bible – which expresses some positive affirmation about God. He attempts to use the words of the sentence to employ the parts of his mind which require to think in words but to concentrate his efforts on holding the rest of his mind open to God. Into this prepared state of mind the meditator then brings the mental image of the particular patient and repeats his name, without dwelling on the disease or making any kind of verbal petition, but thinking of the patient in the context of the love and wholeness of God. This type of prayer, which has been called “the practice of the presence of God”, conceives of God as “the very ground of one’s being” and would seem to involve the deeper levels of consciousness.

The changes observed in the patient’s clinical state, and in his attitude to his illness, were taken as the main variables. The clinical state scale (CS) contained five points. Only the extremes were labelled: 0 as “very poor” and 4 as “very good”. The changes occurring over time could thus be expressed as numbers, preceded by a sign, and comparisons between patients could be made directly.

The net change in the treated patient was compared with that of his paired partner, and greater improvement or less deterioration was given a positive sign. Ties (whether representing equal improvement, equal deterioration or no changes in *both* members of the pair) were ignored [6].

The attitude state scale (AS), however, was verbal: two terms (stoical, positive and co-operative) were scored plus; one (non-committal) as 0; and two (apprehensive; critical and complaining) as negative. This gave a three-point scale, and the observations were

treated in the same way as for the CS. No useful *a priori* estimates of the size of the effect to be expected from prayer were available, but a number of studies summarized by BEECHER [7] point to a recovery rate of 35 per cent. for many conditions treated only with placebo. A consideration of the experimental designs possible with such an average rate for both control and treatment, and of the number of patients likely to be available (conservatively but, as it turned out, rather accurately estimated to be about 40), suggested that a small restricted plan should be used [6]. That in which a true difference of not less than 0.4 in the success rates of the treatment and control conditions (to be detected with the power of 0.95 as the conventional two-sided significance level of 0.05) was chosen.

Adopting the symbolism of ARMITAGE [6], let  $\pi_1$  = percentage improvement in those treated with prayer and  $\pi_2$  = percentage improvement in the control (untreated) group. Then it is assumed in the discussion above that  $\frac{1}{2}(\pi_1 + \pi_2) = 0.35$ .

Also, if the null hypothesis (that there is no difference between treatments) is true,  $\theta_0 = 0.50$ , and there will be a 95 per cent probability of showing a significant difference at the 5 per cent level when the alternative hypothesis,

$$\theta_1 = \frac{\pi_1(1 - \pi_2)}{\pi_1(1 - \pi_2) + \pi_2(1 - \pi_1)} = 0.90.$$

The simultaneous solution of these equations gives  $\pi_1 = 0.57$  and  $\pi_2 = 0.13$ . The present study was therefore so designed as to be capable of detecting an increase in the improvement rate from 13 per cent to at least 57 per cent.

### Results

The scores for clinical state (CS) and attitude scale (AS) are arranged in the chronological order in which the final evaluation of the second member of each pair was received (Table 3). Two pairs of the 19 originally formed (5 & 18 and 13 & 15) were eliminated because one member of each was found at the end not to satisfy the criteria for admission to the trial. In both these cases the CS score in fact would have shown an advantage to the "treated" member. One member of a third pair (43 & 45) failed to attend despite repeated requests. Four gave tied results. Although all the patients had been selected because of their poor prognosis, the CS of six individuals was judged better at the second evaluation and 26 were worse or unchanged. Five of the improved were in the treated group and one in the control. This distribution, which of course ignores the effect of pairing, is significant

at better than the 8 per cent. level by Fisher's exact test (one-tail). The sequential path for comparative changes in CS (Fig. 1) almost touches, but does not cross, the upper boundary at  $n = 6$ . Had the result, which favoured the treatment, preceded the seventh, the boundary would have crossed, and the results would have been considered unlikely to have been due to chance. Observations upon the remaining pairs, who had of course already been in the trial for some time, were continued and are also shown in Fig. 1. Five out of the next six definite results showed an advantage to the control group. The end-result of the continued series reaches the "no significant difference" boundary at  $n = 12$ : and if the combined results are considered without reference to the order in which they occurred  $7/12$  successes are of course not significant either.

The results for AS are similar to those for CS, but give rather less information. This is in part because the smaller range of judgments possible caused more ties (seven in the sixteen pairs).

### *Discussion*

In view of the small sample involved it is hardly surprising that no advantage to either group was demonstrated. It is worth pointing out that, had slightly wider differences in the success rate of the two treatments been insisted on, resulting in an even larger value of  $\theta_1$  than that used [6], the sixth result would have attained the upper boundary, and a statistically significant result would have been claimed. This anomalous situation incidentally suggests a defect in the sequential method that does not seem to have received much attention.

Nevertheless, within the defined limits of the trial, which make it impossible to eliminate chance as the only or even the principal factor involved, the well-marked biphasic appearance of the sequential path (Fig. 1) seems to justify some discussion. The change in trend occurred in pairs of patients being compared one year or more after the initial evaluation: that is, a period more than twice as long as intended, and as the prayer-groups were initially informed. It is not known whether they continued to pray after this time had elapsed. If in fact prayer was discontinued at this point, the measurable effects (to pursue the analogy with more orthodox types of therapy) would be expected to decline with the passage of time.

It may be objected that the sequential design (and, for that matter, any conventional design) assumes a constant difference between  $\pi_1$  and  $\pi_2$  (the success rates of the two treatments) and that if these change differentially with the passage of time the assumption is not justified. However, such changes with time could only become apparent in the

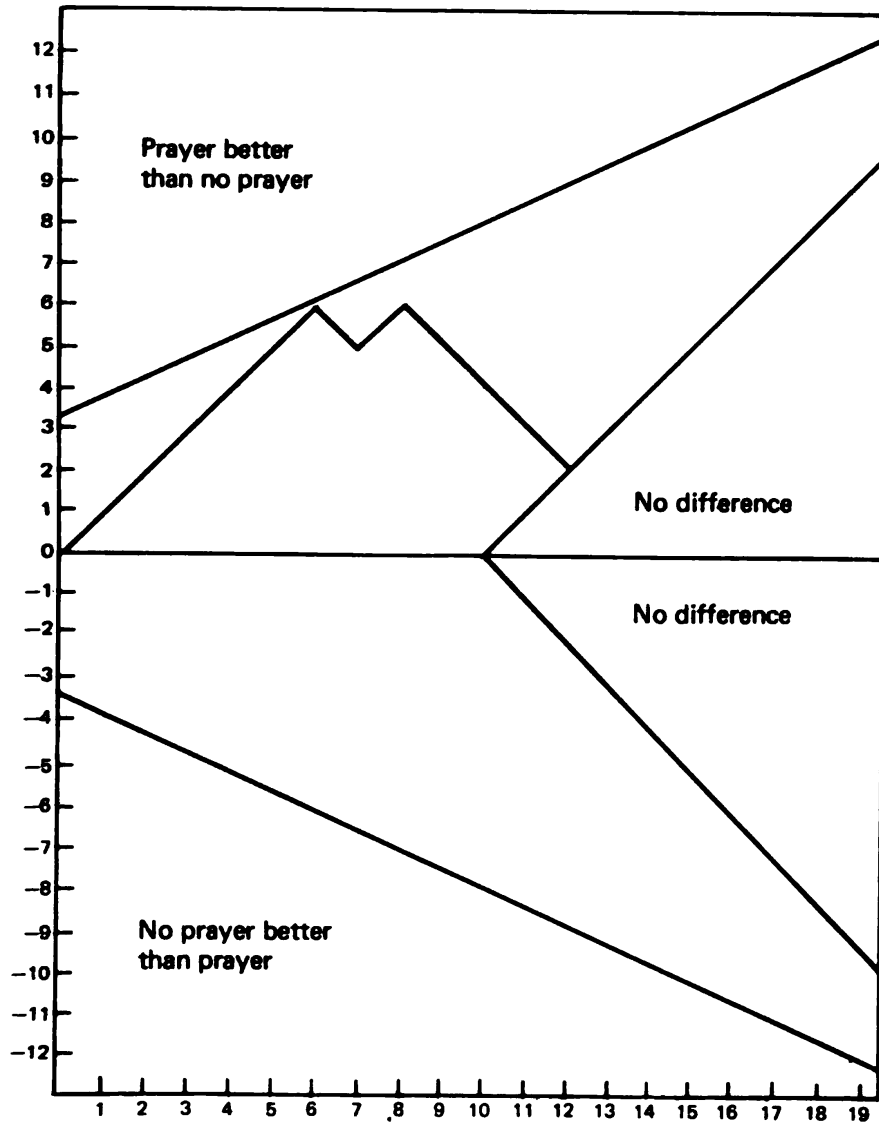


Fig. 1



course of the trial, if indeed they occurred at all: and it is then hardly legitimate to change the form of analysis originally planned. Indeed, the analysis of a substituted two-block design would also have given a result significant at the 5 per cent. level in the first period, in favour of prayer.

The observed clinical improvement rates in the two groups may be compared with those expected. The treated group showed five actual improvements in 16 cases: a rate of 31 per cent., against 57 per cent. expected. The control group had only one improvement, a rate of 6 per cent., against 13 per cent. expected. Assuming only random variation to be responsible for the differences, the average improvement rate, therefore, was 19 per cent., instead of the 35 per cent. expected. It should be remembered that the patients selected for the trial were suffering from "chronic stationary or progressively deteriorating" disease, so that it is not surprising that BEECHER'S average cure rate [7] of 35 per cent. without active treatment was not attained.

To return to a discussion of factors possibly influencing the behaviour of the prayer-groups: they had in fact been asked to depart from their normal procedure in at least three respects. They had no access to the patients, and hence no collaboration, voluntary or otherwise, from them; nor were they permitted any "feed-back" about their performance for as long as the trial continued. Such factors may have influenced group members not to continue their efforts. Again, differences in the kind of patient seen or in the physician seeing him may have accounted for the two phases, since psychiatric patients dominated the first phase and patients suffering from joint diseases the second (Table 1). It is known from other studies [8] in these two fields that different physicians evaluating remedies under double-blind conditions may arrive at different conclusions; one may obtain an advantage for the drug under test while another fails to distinguish the test drug from the control treatment.

It may be suggested that, due partly to intention and partly to accident, the design of this trial was insufficiently sensitive to detect results due to a spiritual force usually given the name of prayer. It was certainly not capable of distinguishing such a concept from other psychic factors, such as extra-sensory perception or psycho-kinesis [9] which may have been involved. However, the factor of suggestion at least was eliminated.

The doctors who had at any time expressed interest in the trial were invited, before any results were available to them, to record their attitudes to the study.

Originally seven hospital consultants had been approached about

co-operating in the trial, but of these, five (two surgeons and three physicians), decided not to participate. Of these five, three were questioned by letter on their attitudes to the trial and replies were received from two, both of whom came under the category of "believer". One had not taken part on grounds of religious conviction, believing that such a trial was "putting God to the test" and that any results obtained could be explained in terms of telepathy and not necessarily of prayer. The other, although in favour of the trial as a means of providing some useful facts which could contribute to a more comprehensive form of treatment of the sick person, was himself unwilling to take part. The two consultants (one psychiatrist and one physician) who eventually took part fall into the category of "sceptic" in that neither expected any difference between treated and control groups, although one thought that certain incidental information might be obtained. Two other medical opinions, one of a psychiatrist, the other of a medically qualified Anglian priest, both "believers", favoured the trial. Three of the four "believers" anticipated a difference in observable clinical effects in favour of the treated group, though they did not expect this difference to be statistically significant.

Between scientific and non-scientific healing there exists a gap in communication: the interpretations of the one are usually seen as meaningless and irrelevant by the other. The "unbiased observer" and "control group" are important to one and not to the other, and so it is with the insistence of the prayer-group on the "patients' co-operation" and "adherence to traditionally defined methods". At first sight the two attitudes appear incompatible. If phenomena retreat in the face of investigation they can form no part of a scientific enquiry and the scientist cannot be compelled to accept their existence. Nor can their hypothetical existence nor their possible artistic or spiritual value be denied. In a logical sense such phenomena are unknowable, like the dream which defies recall, or statements about the conducting properties of a copper wire when no current flows through it.

If the gap is to be closed, a mutually acceptable language must be found for discussion to be profitable. One interesting aspect of this study has been the degree of co-operation possible between the two investigators, a "sceptic" and a "believer", brought by the accident of friendship and a common training, to recognize that the present investigation was possible.

There may be arguments against further studies of this kind. Statistically significant results might be claimed to support the many non-medically qualified practitioners seeking official recognition, or to encourage ordinary people to believe that prayer is merely a way of

ensuring medical healing. Neither argument seems to us to be a serious obstacle. The ultimate acceptability of experimental truths is determined by personal attitudes that are largely irrational. The methods used in this trial need more testing, just as its conclusions require confirmation: the present paper is only a baptism.

### *Summary*

One of a pair of patients seen by a psychiatrist or a specialist in physical medicine was allocated to a group "treated" by intercessory prayer, the other to "control". Neither the patient, the physician nor the participating prayer groups knew to which group each patient belonged. The patients were unaware that a trial was in progress and all other individual medication and physical treatment prescribed by the consultant was continued in both groups. The clinical state of each patient was re-evaluated by the same physician 8-18 months later. The first six valid and definite results available all showed an advantage to the "treated" group. Five of the next six showed an advantage to the "control" group. These results may be due solely to chance, but the possible involvement of other factors is discussed. The attitudes of possible participants in such studies are important, and some implications of this for future work are also discussed.

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### APPENDIX I

#### Abstract of Case History for Prayer-Group Use

*Mr. Samuel W.* is a welder, in his middle 30's, living in North London. He is married and has suffered from a painful disease of the spinal column for about 15 years. He now suffers quite badly from this but is hopeful about the outcome. Some years ago he also suffered a critical illness affecting his digestive tract.

## APPENDIX II

### SHORT FORM OF CLINICAL EVALUATION

Questionnaire 1. Preliminary assessment: Series No. 18.

Group: 6  T  C

Name of patient: **First Name** SAMUEL **Surname** SMITH **Hospital Number** 9999/53  
(Samuel W.)

**Town of residence:** Highgate **Occupation:** welder

**Religion:** C. of E. **Age:** 37 **Sex:**  M  F **Marital status:** S  M  W  D

**Principal diagnosis:** Ankylosing spondylitis **Duration:** 14 years

**Subsidiary diagnosis:** Gastric hemorrhage **Duration:** 7 years

Please indicate which category is the most appropriate in each of the three questions below:

1. Initial evaluation of patient's conditions: (very poor)  
(Physician's own grading in arbitrary units)
- |                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | 0 |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | 1 |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | 2 |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | 3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | 4 |
- (very good)

2. Patient's attitude to his illness and to the doctor's treatment:

Stoical	<input type="checkbox"/>
Positive and co-operative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Non-committal	<input type="checkbox"/>
Apprehensive	<input type="checkbox"/>
Critical and complaining	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. Likely prognosis over next six months:

Improvement	<input type="checkbox"/>
No change	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Deterioration	<input type="checkbox"/>

Initials of examining physician: A. A.

**TABLE 1A: INFORMATION ABOUT CONTROL PATIENTS**

Serial No.	Patient No.	Doctor	Age	Sex	Marital status	Religion†	Primary diagnosis‡	Duration‡
1	17	A	35	F	M	A	RA	4
2	4	A	66	M	M	A	RA	5
3	12	B	36*	M*	M*	A*	RA*	5
4	7	A	65*	F	M	R*	RA	20
5	13	A	60	M	M	A*	SL*	2**
6	14	B	59	F	M*	A*	RA*	2
7	2	A	56	F	W*	A	AS*	30**
8	5	A	28	M	M	A	AS	9
9	11	B*	40*	F	S*	A	RA	12
10	21	A	63	F	W*	A*	RA	7
11	24	A	55*	M*	M	A	AS*	30**
12	37	D	52	F*	M	A	IP	L**
13	34	D	39*	F*	S*	A	ON*	10**
14	39	D	42	F	M*	H	AX*	15**
15	29	D	43	F	M	H*	HP	L
16	31	D	42	F	M	A*	MD	L
17	30	D	51	F	S*	O*	SZ*	20**
18	42	A	73*	F	W*	A	OA*	3
19	43	A	61*	F	M	R*	RA	14

**TABLE 1B: INFORMATION ABOUT TREATED PATIENTS**

Serial No.	Patient No.	Prayer group	Doctor	Age	Sex	Marital status	Religion†	Primary diagnosis‡	Duration‡
1	3	1	A	44	F	M	A	RA	6
2	16	1	A	60	M	M	A	RA	5
3	9	1	B	23*	F*	S*	H*	DS*	2
4	1	4	A	46*	F	M	A*	RA	11
5	15	4	A	69	M	M	H*	RA*	17**
6	10	4	B	50	F	S*	C*	CS*	3
7	8	6	A	57	F	M*	A	OA*	10**
8	18	6	A	37	M	M	A	AS	14
9	6	6	C*	78*	F	M*	A	RA	3
10	22	2	A	63	F	M*	H*	RA	7
11	23	2	A	66*	F*	M	A	RA*	11**
12	33	10	D	50	M*	M	A	IP	20**
13	35	10	D	57*	M*	M*	A	DP*	L**
14	41	10	D	40	F	S*	H	HP*	L**
15	28	10	D	46	F	M	A*	HP	L
16	40	10	D	43	F	M	R*	MD	L
17	38	10	D	55	F	M*	A*	AS*	3**
18	47	7	A	60*	F	S*	A	RA*	5
19	45	7	A	40*	F	M	A*	RA	12

\* Unsatisfactory matching:

1	7**	4	9	9	9	7**
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† Religion: A = C. of E.; R = Roman Catholic; H = Hebrew; C = Congregational; O = Agnostic.

‡ Diagnosis: RA = Rheumatoid arthritis; AS = Ankylosing spondylitis; OA = Osteoarthritis; SL = Scleroderma; IP = Immature personality; DP = Depression; ON = Obsessional neurosis; AX = Anxiety neurosis; HP = Hysterical personality; MD = Mental defect; SZ = Schizophrenia.

‡ L = Lifelong duration.

\*\* More than 10 years' difference.

TABLE 2: SUMMARY OF PATIENT CHARACTERISTICS

	Treated	Control
<b>Women</b>	14	14
<b>Men</b>	5	5
<b>Single</b>	4	3
<b>Married</b>	15	13
<b>Divorced</b>	0	0
<b>Widowed</b>	0	3
<b>Age: &lt; 30 yr.</b>	1	1
30-40 yr.	3	4
40-50 yr.	6	3
50-60 yr.	5	6
>60 yr.	4	5
<b>Religion:</b>		
Church of England	14	14
Catholic	1	2
Hebrew	4	2
Agnostic	0	1
<b>Duration of illness: &lt; 1 yr.</b>	0	0
1-5 yr.	6	6
6-20 yr.	8	8
>20 yr.	5	5
<b>Initial clinical state:</b>		
0	0	1
1	4	2
2	7	7
3	8	9
4	0	0

TABLE 3A: RESULTS OF TREATMENT – CONTROL PATIENTS

Serial No. of pair	Pair first seen in	Result after months	Patient No.	Clinical state (CS)			Attitude scale (AS)		
				1st Eval.	2nd Eval.	Change	1st Eval.	2nd Eval.	Change
12	Feb. 62	8	37	2	2	0	+	+	0
13	Feb. 62	8	34	2	2	0	+	+	0
14	Feb. 62	8	39	1	1	0	-	-	0
15	Feb. 62	8	29	2	1	-1	+	-	-2
16	Feb. 62	8	31	3	3	0	+	+	0
17	Feb. 62	8	30	3	0	-3	0	-	-1
6	Jan. 62	10	14	3	2	-1	+	+	0
11	Feb. 62	10	24	3	3	0	+	+	0
2	Jan. 62	11	4	1	1	0	0	0	0
18	May 62	11	42	2	1	-1	+	+	0
3	Jan. 62	14	12	2	2	0	0	+	+1
9	Jan. 62	16	11	3	3	0	+	+	0
1	Jan. 62	16	17	3	3	0	+	+	0
7	Jan. 62	16	2	3	2	-1	+	0	-1
10	Feb. 62	16	21	3	3	0	0	+	+1
4	Jan. 62	18	7	0	1	+1	+	0	-1

TABLE 3B: RESULTS OF TREATMENT – TREATED PATIENTS

Serial No. of pair	Patient No.	Clinical state (CS)			Attitude scale (AS)			Outcome	
		1st Eval.	2nd Eval.	Change	1st Eval.	2nd Eval.	Change	CS	AS
12	33	1	1	0	0	-	-1	X	C
13	35	1	2	+1	-	-	0	T	X
14	41	3	3	0	+	+	0	X	X
15	28	1	1	0	-	-	0	T	T
16	40	3	4	+1	-	+	+2	T	T
17	38	3	2	-1	+	+	0	T	T
6	10	2	3	+1	0	+	+1	T	T
11	23	2	3	+1	+	+	0	T	X
2	16	2	1	-1	-	-	0	C	X
18	47	3	4	+1	+	+	0	T	X
3	9	2	2	0	+	+	0	X	C
9	6	2	1	-1	+	+	0	C	X
1	3	3	2	-1	+	-	-2	C	C
7	8	3	2	-1	+	-	-2	X	C
10	22	3	2	-1	0	+	+1	C	X
4	1	1	0	-1	+	+	0	C	T

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### *Postscript*

After discussion both authors agreed to the re-publication of their original paper in its unaltered form, which has never been published in this country. When it was turned down by the editors of a number of medical journals in Britain, we tried an editorial contact in the United States, with immediate acceptance. The volume of requests for reprints was staggering. Since then we have received some degree of unsolicited publicity. Professor D. R. Laurence, in particular, has done us the unexpected honour of referring to the paper, both in his inaugural lecture to the Chair of Pharmacology at University College Hospital, London, and in the list of further reading on the subject of therapeutic trials in the current edition of his popular textbook, "Clinical Pharmacology".\*

We stand by our original thesis: that "if physical and mental effects do indeed occur as a result of intercessory prayer, it should be possible to assess these and to establish their clinical and statistical significance in a similar way to that for any medical form of treatment". The number of patients involved in our experiment was too small and the results inconclusive. The whole question remains open for others to take up where we left off. Had the subject under investigation been a drug by now there would have been a flood of further experiments, some confirming and others refuting its clinical effects. We were not dealing with a drug, but with an age-old religious phenomenon, whose roots lie buried in our "collective unconscious" and in our sense of the magical. We think this paper should be allowed to speak for itself. Our own reasons for not pursuing the thesis further would require a separate paper.

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\* Laurence, D. R. *Clinical Pharmacology*, 3rd Edition, 1966.



# On Distinguishing Perception from Memory

*Donald Broadbent*

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The common stock of words we use to describe the interactions of human beings with the world and with each other is not intended for close analysis of the nature of human beings themselves: it was devised for other purposes and in other contexts, and it will not bear the strain of the kind of superstructure which many seek to put upon it. Indeed, the notions about ourselves which are enshrined in our language are likely to be as much in error as the naïve concept in physics that motion rather than acceleration is the phenomenon which requires explanation. In ordinary life, we have to push things to move them: and it requires a fairly traumatic experience in adolescence before many people are prepared to accept Newton's Laws and to recognize that traditional terms and concepts are not appropriate for discussing the trajectory of a missile, even though they may do perfectly well as nursery language for telling a toddler not to push a cup off a table. Similarly, terms such as perception, memory, attending, or consciousness are terms inappropriate to any exact grasp of the human situation. Such terms may legitimately be used in everyday discourse, or even taken up into technical language and given some special meaning separate from that which attaches to them in ordinary speech, as has happened with the concept of force in physics: but they must not be treated as if the existence of a word with a regular usage in the everyday world implied the adequacy of that word when used otherwise than at tea parties and in shops.

This is not of course a new point of view: it is behaviourism as that approach has actually operated rather than in the entertaining caricature that sometimes passes for it. General arguments like the foregoing are, however, convincing only to those who share the faith already, and it is more convincing to see for oneself the kind of difficulties into which the use of common language can lead one. The origins of behaviourism lay in such technical difficulties in the handling of problems current 50 to 60 years ago. Contemporary issues raise them even more powerfully. Let us consider as an example an issue discussed in a recent paper by Haber (1966), namely the selectivity of perception. It has been known since the time of Külpe (1904) that a man who is

asked to look for a certain feature of a visual field has difficulty in reporting other aspects of it for which he was not instructed to look. This experiment can most usefully be done by presenting the visual scene in the shape of a very brief flash so short that no movement of the eyes can occur, thus guaranteeing that the selectivity is not due to a movement of the eyes to a position where the desired parts of the scene produce more stimulation than the remainder.

As the years have gone by, various methodological improvements have been made in this experiment. In modern times the classic work is probably that of a distinguished Californian psychologist whose name is D. H. Lawrence. (This in itself should be enough to dispose of the simple view that a name in common usage necessarily always refers to a simple unitary concept.) In one of Lawrence's most discussed experiments (Lawrence and Laberge 1956) the scene presented to the experimental subject consists of two cards. Each of these cards, like an ordinary playing card, contains a number of examples of a shape such as a diamond: the number varies from card to card, and as with ordinary playing cards the colour of the shapes on any one card is identical but is not the same from card to card. Unlike ordinary playing cards, the shapes give one no information about the colour in which they are printed. The experimental subject can be asked then to report either the shapes he has seen, or the numbers of symbols on each card, or the colours. Alternatively, he may be asked to give all three qualities, reporting one aspect of the scene first, another second, and the third last. Using this technique one can show that the accuracy of report for the first item reported is very much the same whether the victim receives his instructions before or after the flash of light strikes his eye; the difference in efficiency occurs between the first item reported and the other items reported later. The way in which one would perhaps most naturally state this result in ordinary language is that perception itself is not selective, but memory is. You see all features of the stimulus, and you can report any one of them, but by the time you have done that you have forgotten the others.

Haber himself has carried out a whole series of investigations of this situation, with various modifications and refinements. He found early on that people doing this kind of experiment reported two different kinds of introspection. Some of them would look at a scene and say to themselves "Two red squares, three green triangles" while other people would look at the same scene and say to themselves "Two three, red green, triangles squares". Haber trained fresh subjects in each of these two methods of attack: and the objective success of the two methods, at reporting what was really there, differed. It seems in fact that people

who talk to themselves in ordinary English syntax show relatively little difference whether they get their instructions before or after stimulation: while people who pick out one of the qualities first and then another show a large difference depending on the time when the instruction was given. If one measures the speed with which people can describe a pair of cards like this, in the usual order of words and in the unusual order, one finds that the usual order is considerably faster: and correspondingly people who talk to themselves in ordinary English do rather better throughout than do people who pick one quality first.

What this pattern of results seems to mean therefore is that the longer one waits before saying to oneself what is on the cards, the more likely one is to get it wrong. It therefore matters quite a lot whether one says first to oneself the words corresponding to a particular feature of the stimulus, or whether one does not say them until after other words have been said. On the other hand, provided one can talk to oneself quickly one can get any feature of the card as well as any other regardless of selective instructions given before or after the stimulation.

Haber describes this result again in ordinary language as arguing against the selectivity of perception itself. His account of what is happening is of course consistent with a large body of other experiments by other people, all supporting a similar view of the things that are happening inside a man when we flash a picture at him and tell him to give us information about what is in it. Another classic experiment for example is that of Sperling (1960), who displayed to his experimental subjects nine numbers in three rows of three. If the flash of light is sufficiently brief, one cannot perceive all the numbers and the probability of any one number being correctly reported may be quite low. Sperling also instructed his subjects however that when he played a high note they were to report the numbers on the top row, when a low note the numbers in the bottom row, and when a note of medium pitch the middle row. He then presented the note at various time intervals after the original flash. At a very short interval, where the tone arrives perhaps a tenth of a second after the numbers, the subject may report completely correctly whichever three numbers are indicated by the tone. Potentially therefore all nine numbers must have been available to him, and he could give any three. As the point in time at which the sound stimulus is delivered moves later and later than the visual stimulus, so the performance begins to drop away until the chance of getting any particular number right becomes just the same as it would be if no tone was given at all.

Here again therefore the picture of the process is the same as that given by Haber: at the moment of stimulation the whole visual scene is

simultaneously available, and then gradually dies away while one rushes to convert it into some coded form for reporting to the inquisitive experimenter. The original wave of information coming in from the surroundings is not selected, but on the other hand it dies away in a fleeting instant, being almost totally gone in a second. The process of picking some of this plenty and formulating a neat set of verbal labels is selective, and once it has occurred it is much more resistant to the passage of time. Some studies by J. F. Mackworth (1963) actually attempt to measure the time taken for encoding any one item from the visual field, and come out with one time for picking up a digit, and a rather longer time for picking up letters of the alphabet.

Similar effects can be shown in hearing, and indeed this is the scene of my own activities. I repeated the classic experiment of Külpe in acoustic form by asking people to listen to a mixture of different messages on a tape recording. If they knew in advance which one they were to answer, they did much better than if they were told the correct one only afterwards (Broadbent 1952). Further analysis showed that this was not because the sensitivity of the ear itself was affected, but rather because the information once inside the brain could not be stored sufficiently long to wait for the signal as to which message was to be answered. I therefore argued (Broadbent 1958) that all the information from the senses went first to a storage system which could hold it only for a very brief time, and that from this store certain parts were filtered off into a far more limited and restricted system. Once again the evidence for this concept rested largely on changing the precise timing at which stimuli arrived and looking at the effects on the efficiency with which they were perceived.

In this last phrase however we have hit upon the core of the difficulty. To me, if one was going to use ordinary language, it seemed reasonable to say that perception is selective but that a fortunate dispensation of nature ensures that things which happen while we are not attending are not lost for ever, but can be caught from a very transient memory if one is fast enough about it. That I am not alone in this can be shown by the usage of other authors. For example, A. W. Melton (1966) is a defender of the view that memory is a single process obeying the same rules whether one considers experiments lasting a short time or a longer one. In discussing this problem however he distinguishes the form of memory shown in the experiment of Sperling by describing it as "pre-perceptual". Melton is concerned only with post-perceptual storage, and is arguing for the unity of that function, but the keypoint for our present purposes is that he like myself regarded the loose word "perception" as applying to the selective

process of picking off, and not to the original unselective and highly transient state of affairs.

Haber or Lawrence then seem to hold that perception is not selective, while Melton and Broadbent hold that it is. But of course this is not really a disagreement at all about the nature of the processes going on inside a man, but merely about the words we are going to use to describe them. None of us really disagree about the scientific points in issue, we merely use different words in ordinary language when we are trying to explain across a coffee cup what our experiments show. When human beings observe a situation, there is an early stage in the process at which all the information is simultaneously present and available, and a later stage at which part of it has been selected and transformed to a different form while the rest of the original information has decayed away and disappeared. Melton and I call the second of these perception and regard the first as something more of the nature of memory: Haber and Lawrence regard the first as perception and the second as memory.

Perhaps one might argue that one side or the other, however good their science, was bad at philosophy and had therefore used perception to refer to the wrong part of the process. Everyday usage however can be made to support either point of view. Perception is defined in ordinary dictionaries as a process of becoming aware or conscious: if we ask what consciousness is, an ordinary dictionary is likely to refer us back to awareness or to perception: Place (in Gustafson 1964) refers "being conscious of something" to a peculiar internal state of the individual which normally accompanies any reasonably intensive stimulation of his receptor organs. From this point of view, the consciousness of an event must refer to its arrival at the first stage of the process which experimental work reveals; because arrival at the second stage is not by any means a regular consequence simply of stimulation. Furthermore, it would be fairly safe to say that most people, if asked, would say that the difference between perception and memory was that the first was the state following immediately upon stimulation of the senses, while the second is a less direct process liable to occur at some later time than stimulation itself. These points support the usage favoured by Haber and by Lawrence, and oppose that of Melton and of Broadbent. Another pointer in the same direction is, as Place remarks, that we regard consciousness of something as a necessary condition that an individual would be able to give a verbal report of it; but we do not hold that he is able to give a verbal report of everything of which he is conscious.

Before we decide that the issue is closed, however, there are further

complications to be considered. If perception is the early stage of the process, then perception is unselective: only a form of memory is selective. Yet in ordinary language we speak of attending to something, and Place analyses this expression as referring to a regulation of the vividness of the individual's consciousness of the object to which he is attending. This usage clearly refers to a general experience of some sort, which seems to correspond in our experimental analysis to the second rather than the first stage of the process. Again it could be plausibly predicted that most people, if asked whether attention referred simply to the selection of certain events in memory or in perception, would plump for the latter. The analysis of attention by Ryle (1949) while different from that of Place, would surely agree in putting attention in the second stage of the process rather than in the first. If one says that "attending to an object" implies a disposition under favourable circumstances to give a verbal report of the object, one is supposing that information about the object goes through the stage of coding and categorization which is essential for later verbal report. Indeed, this same argument can be applied to Place's definition also, since the second stage of the process as well as the first is essential for verbal report although it does not necessarily imply that such a report will always be given.

There seem therefore to be reasonable grounds in ordinary usage for supporting the view of Broadbent and Melton rather than that of Haber and Lawrence. Arguments of this kind do not really compel one usage or the other. Furthermore, one can push the difficulties to a finer and even more intractable point. Consider a man who is looking at a dimly lit surface, and trying to see whether there is one spot in it which is just slightly brighter. The information striking his senses at any one instant will be transmitted through his nervous system in a slightly unreliable way, and indeed the quantal nature of light means that there is a slight unreliability in it even when it strikes his senses. If therefore his perception were to depend upon a truly instantaneous message from his senses, it would be highly unreliable when a very faint event is to be detected. To increase the reliability, an automatic detector would certainly average the information that was coming in over an appreciable period of time, and only indicate the presence of an object if the average of that substantial period gave grounds for confidence. Such an average could be reliable: human life is uncertain, but life insurance companies make a steady profit. Thus in taking a photograph in a dim light, one needs to take a time exposure rather than a snap shot. The eye and brain operate similarly, and it is certain that perception of a faint light depends upon the average of events reaching

the eye over a period of time. If an experience which occurs after the external event which provoked it, and which depends upon a causal process of storage within the brain, is to be called memory, then even the simplest possible perceptions are themselves already memories.

It seems simplest to recognize that the ordinary use of the word perception was not intended for this degree of refined distinction. In ordinary life, we want to use a number of phrases like "I saw him coming", "I heard the bus leave", "I felt the plane shudder beneath me"; and as a general term for such processes we talk about perception. We are not dissecting the process but talking about it generally, and to dispute about the application of the word "perception" to particular parts of the process, when we reveal it by experiment, is as unprofitable as taking apart a clock, observing that the timekeeping mechanism is separate from the hammer and bell, and then disputing whether "the clock struck three" means that the clock calculated that it had reached three and then struck it, or whether it struck three and then instructed the hammer to come into contact with the bell.

The foregoing examples show the kinds of difficulty which one encounters in attempting to handle any kind of sophisticated knowledge about human beings in terms of traditional categories. They work well enough up to a point, and especially if one redefines them privately to mean special things. But there is a constant danger of misunderstanding because other people may not share one's own usage. Psychologists tend therefore to develop technical languages, which sometimes appear rather numerous because each problem accumulates its own jargon. This apparent variety however is misleading: the different languages used by psychologists who are working in different areas have in fact a great deal in common in the way they are generated and in which disagreements are resolved. In these respects there is no divergence between the approach of animal learning specialists, who talk about stimulus and response and conditioning: that of the psychophysicists who measure the relation between, say, the physical characteristics of the noise of a jet and the amount of subjective loudness which it produces; and the user of analogies between the nervous system and computers or communications channels, such as myself. It is perhaps easiest to see what the underlying principles are by looking at one of these languages in detail, and it is easiest of all to take the one I use myself.

If a morse message is being received over the radio, the arrival of a particular sequence of dots and dashes conveys information because it is one of a set of other sequences any one of which might in fact have arrived. Corresponding to the set of sequences of dots and dashes, there

is also a set of letters of the alphabet, and each member of one set corresponds to a member of the other. When therefore one particular sequence of dots and dashes arrives, it selects a letter from the set of letters in the alphabet. The morse signal therefore conveys information not in itself but because there is a known set of signals from which one is selected. Similarly, when we show a man an object, it is possible to consider this object as conveying information only because it represents one out of a large set of different events which might have occurred to the man. Following the presentation of the object, a complex event takes place inside his nervous system, and again there are a large number of such complex events any one of which might have occurred. In so far as the particular one which did occur corresponds uniquely to the object that was presented, it preserves the information about the object. At the next stage in the nervous system, there is again a set of possible events from which only one occurs, and again one can enquire into the degree of correspondence between this event and its antecedents. Ultimately, the man may take some action, such as saying something, and this action again is chosen from a large set of possibilities, and may correspond directly or in some indirect way to the particular object that was shown him.

There may of course be convergence and loss of information in this process: if a man sees an Arabic digit 2, he may treat it as equivalent to a Roman digit II, or to the printed word two, or to the sound of a person saying the same number, and so on. When this happens it may be taken as indicating that a single common event inside the man has corresponded to any one of the different possible inputs. Equally there may be divergence: a man may say "I saw a 2", he may tap the right key on a calculating machine, he may write it down in handwriting or as an Arabic numeral, and so on. In such a case different output events are corresponding to one particular central event.

The passage of information will not normally take the form of a simple stream running through from the senses to the various organs through which a man can act, but rather will contain loops, side channels, and so on. In some cases a relatively long lasting event, chosen from a set of similarly long lasting ones, will correspond to one of the more transient events bringing information in from the senses, and thus act as a store of that information. This stored information again may issue into the flow of transient events, and so affect outputs.

What has been said so far is not of course a theory of the functioning of human beings, but a language in which to discuss the particular way in which they do function: many different theories could be expressed in this language. It will be clear however that one can discuss the flow



chart for information through a human being without raising the question which part of this chart corresponds in ordinary language to perception and which to memory. One can also, incidentally, avoid discussing the physical or other nature of the events which convey the information: it is not the nature of the events which is of interest, but the fact that they are chosen from sets, and some of the sets of events could take place outside the physical world altogether for all I care, though I think it unlikely. This type of language is of course closely similar to that used in discussing the programming of computers, where a similar independence from the physical embodiment of the programme is met: the programmer may not know the part of the computer where particular storage is taking place, and in many cases does not even know what the physical basis of the storage is. Nevertheless, there are important and difficult problems of the flow of information in a complex programme which can be discussed in ignorance of these physical matters: indeed, many of them are nowadays so technical and specialized that people who study them have hardly time to find out any engineering details about the computer itself, even if they were interested which quite a few of them seem not to be.

An important difference from the use of similar languages in the case of computers is of course that we are not constructing a flow chart ourselves in order to achieve a certain end, but rather trying to find out what the flow chart is inside a man, which has been constructed already. This therefore raises important methodological questions of the way in which we can become confident of the existence of certain features of the flow. For example it may be perfectly meaningful and clear to all users of the language what is meant by suggesting that there is a flow of information back to the selective encoding of Haber, from a long-term store of conditional probabilities of past events (see bottom line of the diagram on page 299, Broadbent 1958). However it may at any instant be difficult to devise a set of experiments which would entitle one to say definitely whether such a pathway exists or not. When it is difficult to devise such a test, the case becomes rather analagous to the classic instance of discussing mountains on the far side of the moon, which has now been ruined for philosophers by the publication of photographs of that region. Before these photographs arrived, it was clearly meaningful to discuss the mountains although there was no practical way of finding out whether they were there or not. Similarly in psychological questions there are a number of topics which are beyond existing experimental resources, but equally it is possible by methods such as those discussed earlier in this paper to

reach a reasonable understanding of certain parts of the system.

If we now stand back from this kind of language, and look at its general characteristics, we see that it does not embody any presupposition about the way in which human beings operate. Ordinary language does include such presuppositions: one of the clearest examples of this being the way in which verbs such as "perceive" "notice" "remember" require a subject, and immediately raise the kinds of question of personal identity which are discussed by Strawson (see Gustafson 1964). The general notion enshrined in ordinary language and therefore in much philosophical discussion is of a complete human being with all his functions seated in a control room with a lot of communication channels coming in and out, and debating with himself how he can possibly be said to have knowledge of other minds, or, in terms of the analogy, of the state of other control rooms. On my view, ordinary language pushes one towards this kind of picture not because it is a true picture through embodiment of distinctions men have found worth drawing in the lifetime of many generations, as Austin might say, but rather because ordinary language is used for purposes such as answering questions like "Do you remember the funny man at the camp site in Belgium?" In situations such as answering this question, it is perfectly fair for the verb "remember" to have as its subject a complete human being, but we are here oriented towards dealing practically with the world of affairs. It would be absurd to conclude from this that, for example, there was some central point within the flow chart where "I" sit, just as it would be absurd to suppose that "the clock strikes three" implies that there is a special essence of clock which resides perhaps in the escapement. It is of course entirely possible that, in a flow chart of human psychology, some parts of the system can be seen to have more far-reaching consequences than others and to act in an integrative and controlling kind of way: for example, the central event corresponding to "2" in the instance already given, which can be produced by many different stimuli and give rise to many different responses, is clearly an important point in the process, and this may be the residual truth in ordinary language which makes many people keen to retain it.

One of the outstanding advantages of the language of information processing, however, is that it does not require everybody to work the same way. There is a very strong undercurrent in ordinary language that processes such as perception or memory are the same for everybody, at least to the extent that walking or shaking hands are the same for everybody. It is however much more likely that they are similar only in the same sense that getting to a lecture on time is the same for

everybody: one person may go on a bicycle by the most direct route, while the other takes a car and comes the pretty way. Computer programmes to achieve the same end may go about it in very different ways, and it is likely both on general principles and from a certain amount of observation that human beings differ in the same kind of way. General similarities may be laid down by inborn endowment, but these leave a good deal of freedom for individual variation. Computers programmed to solve problems do so very frequently by using strategies or "heuristics" which do not guarantee success but are likely to improve the odds on it. That is, they may behave like a man who looks for a restaurant in a strange city by going always towards the wider streets, or by always going westwards. Two programmes working on different heuristics may go about their tasks in ways which seem to have nothing in common, even although the underlying principles of their actions are the same: just as two men trying to find a restaurant by different strategies may part company very rapidly even though there is no fundamental difference in their knowledge of the town.

For example, if one considers again the problem of selective perception considered at the beginning of the paper, it is likely that everybody deals with incoming information by putting it all simultaneously for a second or so in what computer people would call a buffer store, and then picking off parts of it successively for putting in sequence through a processor of limited capacity. They can however differ very widely in the sequence they use and the type of coding they adopt: you will remember that Haber found a relatively mild but still important difference within his own subjects, depending on whether they looked at one object at a time or one quality at a time. Many psychological experiments, quite apart from Haber's, show that the observable behaviour of people differs quite widely in the same perceptual situation. Some categorize widely and tend to see similarities between different objects: others draw fine distinctions and categorize narrowly. Some are heavily influenced by the type of objects they have been viewing recently, and others are not. It seems extremely dangerous to discuss experience or perception in general terms as if it was always the same process in different people, unless one is using such concepts merely to refer to the gross and overall situation in which a man finds himself.

In summary then the traditional terms which are sometimes regarded as referring to mental activities or states give us grave difficulty when we try to apply them to detailed experimental analyses of the way people work. One could perhaps redefine the traditional terms in order to make them become equivalent to one of the new concepts necessary

to explain the experiments, as physicists have done: but this is probably not a very helpful line of attack in psychology because it is likely to produce more misunderstanding than is the case in physics. There is no obvious and clearly correct way of identifying the traditional with the experimental concepts. One needs therefore to abandon the older mental terms, and rather to generate new technical languages for considering particular psychological problems. One such language is that of information processing, although it is only typical of a number of others. It has the characteristics of placing very little emphasis on the intrinsic nature of events, but rather on their inter-relationship and correspondence; nor does it contain different categories of statement distinguished by the sources from which knowledge about them is obtained. It also avoids assumptions about the nature of human functioning which are implicit in ordinary language, such as the notion of an integral and indivisible identity acting as a subject for the various "mental" verbs. Lastly, it allows and indeed almost requires that the different operations which roughly correspond to the traditional mental ones will be carried out differently by different people. It tends therefore to be an entirely public language, with no special access to any class of data. In all these respects it is typical of most technical languages in modern psychology.

All this of course does not mean that we need change the terms we use in our coffee break or at parties: but it does argue very strongly that one should not place the significance upon ordinary language that is given by most of the essays collected by Gustafson 1964. In ordinary language it is correct to say "the sun rises in the East" and not correct to say "the horizon drops at dawn", but that would be a poor basis for physics.

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# Religion and the Social Anthropology of Religion: III. Myth

*Dorothy Emmet*

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In my last article I was considering the social anthropology of ritual, and in this one I shall be considering the social anthropology of myth. "A story connected with a ritual" is one of the ways in which anthropologists have defined a myth. I do not think that all myths need have a ritual associated with them, any more than that all rituals (for instance those of a ceremonial kind) need be associated with myths. Of course, as with all matters of definition, this is largely how we choose to use words. We could choose to say that rituals which have no symbolic reference to a story behind them are purely ceremonial; we could say that stories concerned with how something began, or with doings in a heroic past, possibly remembered, possibly imagined, or with transactions between men and animals and super-human beings, are legends or sagas or fairy tales, unless they are also connected with a ritual. But I think this would unduly narrow the range of what has been counted as myth, and this will become apparent in looking at some of the theories that have been held about it. Nevertheless, the association of myth with ritual calls attention to a feature of some myths which may be of importance not only for the social anthropology of religion but also for their religious significance, and at the end of this article I shall try to bring out what I think this is.

The founding fathers of social anthropology in Britain – notably Frazer and Tylor – looked on myths as forms of primitive philosophy, based on personalized and mystical views of the world, to be superseded by science. Frazer, of course, also described rituals connected with some of his main myths – fertility rites with the myth of the Dying and Rising God, and rites conferring sacred power on rulers with the myth of the Divine Kingship. But nevertheless he saw these rituals primarily as ways of dramatizing and perpetuating mistaken beliefs (and also thought the particular myths he discussed were far more widespread than later evidence showed them to be).

A later generation of the anthropologists, more interested in institutions than beliefs, turned away from the question of whether myths were true or false; if pressed, they would probably have said that they were false, but that this was not the point. They fastened

attention on how the rituals associated with myths expressed social relations, reinforced norms, heightened morale, and provided officially recognized occasions for transitions to new stages in life. I looked at this “functionalist” view of rituals in my earlier articles and called attention to the confidence trick it can involve – namely that if this is the correct interpretation of the meaning of the rituals, it will only work if those, or at any rate most of those, performing them do not know that it is the correct interpretation. Malinowski’s view on the connection between ritual and myth and their significance puts this pragmatic view in its most glaring form. “Glaring”, because on the one hand he gives a “high” view of myth which makes it sound so like what certain writers on religion, such as Eliade, think it ought to be, that they quote it with acclamation. Myth, he says has nothing to do with scientific explanations of processes in the natural world. Myth is a history of the supernatural; and in ritual worshippers recreate these supernatural events, and themselves “participate” in them[1]. But, looking behind this “faith to faith” talk, Malinowski the anthropologist says that a myth is in fact “a charter of social organization”, a story providing legitimacy for e.g. the possession of some territory, the rights of some lineage, or the succession to some office. The story provides a precedent for the ritual which continually re-establishes this charter. Malinowski ends his Riddell Lectures on “The Foundations of Faith and Morals” with a purple passage in which he says we must work for the maintenance of the “eternal truths” although to the agnostic scientist (i.e. the anthropologist in the know) they are seen as “indispensable pragmatic figments”.

I mentioned that writers on religious myth, notably Mircea Eliade, disregarding this sting in the tail, have applauded Malinowski’s view of myth as a recital of a piece of sacred history, in which the worshippers in a ritual also become participants. To Eliade this sacred history is concerned with origins, not necessarily always the absolute origin of the world, but the origin of something, e.g. of human beings or of a particular species of animal, or of some discovery such as that of fire. All these are supposed to happen in some indeterminate time out of normal time and worshippers are transported out of their normal time in to that time (*illo tempore*). These stories of origins are mysteries which men could not know unless they were revealed to them in some outstanding experience in which they are aware of the impingement of “being” or “power”.

Quite apart from whether myths always come to people in knock-out experiences, and are not, largely at any rate, products of what Bergson called “*la fonction fabulatrice*”, the love of telling a good

tale, views like this have a disconcerting “take it or leave it” character. The myths are “revealed” bits of sacred history about origins with no connection with processes going on in time as lived here and now; they take us out of our time into sacred time. This takes them right outside any reference to empirical reality. Anthropologists, looking for such a reference, have tried to find it in seeing myths as ways of symbolizing how societies maintain their ways of life or as “~~charts~~ of social organization”, justifying a particular arrangement. This may be too narrow a view, but, as I tried to show in my last article it can take us some way into why some of the symbolism is as it is.

So also can the depth-psychological interpretations. In the last article I described Turner’s view in his paper on “Symbols in Ndembu Ritual”, which combines a depth-psychological interpretation of symbols in myth and ritual with the view of their function in a social process. He showed that these two interpretations taken together can account for the effectiveness of some of the symbols better than either a psychological or sociological interpretation taken separately. This is, of course, a pragmatic view of the myth and ritual in their social effect, and we may not want to stop here. But at least it shows their symbols as effective in an empirical context here and now, and does not only take us into an indeterminate sacred time out of this world.

Another anthropologist who combines a psycho-analytic and a sociological interpretation of the symbolism of a myth is Meyer Fortes. In his *Oedipus and Job in West African Religion* (Cambridge, 1959), he takes two of the world’s great myths, and says that they can be said to correspond to ways in which his West African Tallensi try to deal with problems of guilt and destiny. Here a man’s destiny comes from his own particular grouping of ancestors. These dispense justice by their own standards. The will of the ancestors is only known after they strike, so that disaster may befall a man which he could not have foreseen and avoided by appropriate ritual action towards the ancestors. So his failure can be put down to an unhappy pre-natal Destiny in his ancestor set. This is the Oedipus situation; disaster strikes a man and he experiences guilt, yet did not deliberately do wrong. The man with the evil Destiny is likely to be a social misfit, who had not satisfactorily solved the tensions in his relation to his father and found his place satisfactorily in a wider net of kinship obligations. His remedy is to try to find ritual ways of winning the blessing of the ancestors by submitting to them. He may then be able to turn the Oedipus situation into a Job one, where the disciplinary action of the ancestors is accepted in trust as just, even where one cannot see why it strikes as it does. The point Fortes is wanting to make is that “All the concepts and

beliefs we have examined are religious extrapolations of the experiences generated in the relationships between parents and children in societies with a social organization based on kindred and descent” (p. 78), and that “Ever since Freud’s bold speculations in *Totem and Taboo* and Durkheim’s great work on *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, anthropologists have known that the springs of religion and ritual lie in kinship and social organization” (p. 79).

I do not think that Fortes would want to commit himself to saying that this is the whole truth about religious myth and ritual, even if he might still say it was true about the ‘springs of religion’. I have taken his treatment of Oedipus and Job to show how even the great classical myths can be interpreted as conveying a message about social control. The message is said to be the need to surrender to parental discipline even where its justice is not apparent. A myth is thus a means of social control, not used cynically by priests and kings for this purpose as some of the men of the Enlightenment thought, but providing a powerful symbolic expression of values which they share with their people.

Certainly an interpretation of the religious myth as a projection onto the supernatural plane of emotions, tensions, obligations in family relations is most plausible when interpreting an ancestor cult. Here the ambivalent emotions – latent hostility as well as trust and love – can be seen operating, and cry out for a Freudian interpretation. In a very different social setting the Oedipus myth is still very much with us as symbolizing complex emotional relations between parents and children in a society where people are no longer receptive to a message of accepting the inscrutable rightness of parental discipline. This shows the richness of the myth for sustaining more than one interpretation. But the myth also sets forth the problem of a terrible fate out of proportion to any wrong or mistake on the part of its victim. This still remains glaring when all has been said about parental relations. And the story of Job as describing human suffering amid the inhuman greatness and splendour of the universe goes on having more than a purely literary appeal, as setting out a problem not just to be solved by adjustments in filio-parental relations.

The sociological interpretation of a myth is, then, too narrow; and still too narrow, though more powerful, when combined with a psycho-analytical interpretation. It confines interest to people’s human relations within their human social world. Nevertheless, those who give these interpretations have made their case that myths are concerned at least with this; and in a positivistic climate of thought, they have staked out a role for myth as a way of saying how these relations should be conducted and how conflicts in them should be resolved. They have



given myths a reference to the empirical world, as a means of moral and social control. They have turned "Primitive Man as Philosopher"[2] into "Primitive Man as Social Engineer". Hence a preoccupation with rituals rather than with myths, and if with myths primarily with their association with rituals, since it is in a ritual that re-emphasis on a proper form of social relationships or recognition of some change in social status, can be seen to be dramatically enacted.

I believe we are now passing out of this stage where the interest of social anthropologists has been concentrated on the pragmatic uses of myth and ritual, and are seeing a return to an interest in them as forms of *thought*. The highly controversial, and certainly very difficult writings of Lévi-Strauss are playing a part in this. He is fastening attention on Primitive Man as Logician, if not as Philosopher, and is examining the characteristics of myths as ways of thinking. I shall not attempt to give an all-round exposition of Lévi-Strauss, nor, may I say, am I a Lévi-Strauss follower. But I find some of the things he says about myth exciting and illuminating, and I shall try to bring these out and develop them in my own way, and then come back to the connection of myth with ritual.

I have said that social anthropologists think in terms of patterns of social relationships, rather than, as historians might, of the individual characters and actions of individual people. I also said in my second article that recently they have been specially concerned with problems of conflict in social relationships and of how conflicts are resolved. Lévi-Strauss also is concerned with patterns of relations and with opposition and conflict, but in his own way.

His own way goes through his interest in kinship systems as the keys to primitive social organization. This is of course something which anthropologists have long known, but Lévi-Strauss' originality is in fastening on the question of how, where there is no written language, people are going to be able to record and remember all these necessary distinctions in their social groupings. He says this may be done by using things in the external natural world – animals, plants, material objects – as a code in which to think about things in the cultural world, and to record distinctions in the latter through correlating them with parallel distinctions in the former. This is how he approaches the institution of Totemism, where some social group has a special relation to something in nature, generally an animal or a plant. There have been a number of theories of totemism; some are utilitarian and economic, where the clue is found in the fact that a group does not eat its totem, except on privileged and ritualized occasions. So it is said that this is a way of conserving and distributing a scarce food supply: you exchange

the totem that you can't eat with another group for the totem that they can't eat. Or there is Freud's psycho-analytic theory. In the dim past a band of sons killed their father, who was monopolizing the best women, and they then tried to assuage their guilt feelings by setting up a symbolic father substitute in a totem which must not be killed. Lévi-Strauss cuts through the probably over-simple practicality of the former kind of theory and the more than probably over-subtlety of the latter kind by seeing totemism as a language in which distinctions between social groups are recorded through using familiar distinctions in the natural world. Where there is no writing you cannot chart your relationships in "tables of kindred and affinity", showing whom you may or may not marry. But they can be remembered by being divided into categories corresponding to groupings of e.g. land, water, subaquatic and subterranean animals. "The Menomoni [an American Indian people] have fifty clans which seem to be divisible into quadrupeds on dry land (wolf, dog, deer), quadrupeds inhabiting swampy places (elk, moose, marten, beaver, pekan), 'terrestrial' birds (eagle, hawk, raven, crow), aquatic birds (crane, heron, duck, coot) and finally subterranean animals. But this last category is particularly recalcitrant as many of the animals included in it (bear, turtle, porcupine) could also be included in other classes" (*The Savage Mind*, p. 57). (This illustrates how even the best taxonomies are likely to have some divisions where cross-classificatory troubles are likely to grow.)

There are obviously further problems connected with totemism that this view does not tackle, notably why *taboos* should be associated with the totem. But to say that whatever else totemism may be, it is a way of coding social distinctions through using distinctions in the external world of nature is to see it as a particular instance of a way of thinking which can have wider uses, particularly in the construction of myths.

Lévi-Strauss calls this way of thinking "*bricolage*". This is a word for which we have no proper English equivalent. The "bricoleur" is a do-it-yourself man, who draws on a stock of miscellaneous materials and whatever tools come to hand to do his odd jobs. He is not the meticulous craftsman who insists on the precise tool for the precise job. Bricolage thinking is characteristic of "*la pensée sauvage*", by which Lévi-Strauss does not mean "the thought of primitives", but "primitive thinking" as it exists in all of us. Bricolage thinking does not use abstract terms, but expresses itself through the medium of concrete things and of accounts of events (the "events" may either be fragmentary recollections of the actual past, or imaginary excursions into an ideal past). These are thought of as conveying a message, and the message is not so much the conclusion of a story, though a story

may be told and – in the case of a myth – generally is being told. It is primarily the exhibiting of a relation.

Now the relation which Lévi-Strauss sees as omnipresent in myths is that of *contrast*. Here he sees “*la pensée sauvage*” – primitive thinking – as primarily working by what his predecessor of a generation ago at the Collège de France, Lévi-Bruhl, said it lacked, namely the appreciation of contradiction. Lévi-Bruhl held that “primitives” could not appreciate contradictions because they thought in terms of mystical identities in which things could merge into each other without clear distinctions. This has since been subjected to a good deal of criticism, and been said to show an inadequate grasp of what was being said in context. After all, our own copula “is” can convey other relations besides identity and this can be seen by looking at what is said in its context. So, as Evans Pritchard remarks, when the Nuer say a cucumber is an ox, they certainly do not mean that they do not understand the difference between a cucumber and an ox; they mean in certain situations where a sacrifice is required a cucumber can count instead of the normal ox. But there would not be a situation in which an ox would be substituted for a cucumber, so that they would say “an ox is a cucumber”. Thus what is being asserted is not an identity. If therefore Nuer were accused of saying both that a cucumber was an ox and that a cucumber was not an ox, they would not be asserting a contradiction which they were unable to see was a contradiction; they would be perfectly able to explain what they meant by both these statements.

Lévi-Strauss starts from the need to make exclusive distinctions – notably between whom you may marry and whom you may not. I have said that he sees totemism as a classificatory system for recording these distinctions. If we ask how non-totemic peoples do this recording, Lévi-Strauss has ingeniously shown how a caste system can be mapped on a totemic system, the caste coding being symbolized through occupational activities, i.e. by who may or may not handle certain material and cultural objects. This is then correlated with the totemic coding in natural species of animals and plants, both codes giving the key to whom you may marry and whom you may not[3].

Bricolage thinking, which codes distinctions in the social and cultural order through using distinctions in the natural order, is also a kind of thinking which gives rise to myth. Hence (a) the concrete natural things which appear in the myth will need to stand for something else of a more abstract kind, in other words the myth will not just be a story, but a story which symbolizes something else. (b) The presentation will proceed through dichotomous contrasts. In totemic and caste systems natural and cultural objects are used as

means of classifying distinctions in social groupings. In myth a number of elements (which may be natural or cultural properties as well as things) are set in contrast in a story form. On the question of what these contrasts symbolize, Lévi-Strauss has a good deal less to say than he has about the patterns in which myths are presented. He calls that which they may be about the "substructure", and holds that this is likely to be a matter of conflicting and reciprocal relations within the social order. Here of course he is saying the same in principle as the functional sociologists. But he has much less to say about interpretation than about the "superstructure", the pattern of the myth, and it is possible that what he says about this might stand even if we do not accept the view that the interpretation is purely to be given in terms of sociological facts. His main point is that the significance of a myth will be found by looking at the ways in which its elements are contrasted and not by looking at the literal meaning of the elements themselves. So in a series of myths of the Bororo of South America jaguars appear always in contrast to men; e.g. men eat cooked food, jaguars eat raw food; jaguars eat men, but men do not eat jaguars. But the primaeval jaguar possessed cultural goods, notably fire, and in some of the stories also bows and arrows and a human wife. Man as primaeval cultural hero stole these from him, and now they have changed places. Jaguars have no weapons, no fire, eat raw food. The elements of these myths may be pieces of bricolage, doings of animals and imaginary cultural heroes. The contrasts bring out the mutual dependence and at the same time rivalry between men and animals, who are competing for the same food and where man through cultural achievements has now got the upper hand. (Or there may once have been a "Jaguar" clan whose women and goods were captured by another clan. This isn't an interpretation which Lévi-Strauss gives, as far as I know. It would be in line with the view that myths are "charters of social organization".)

The very complicated *La Geste d'Aswidal* myth, coming from a tribe on the Pacific coast south of Alaska, recounts a number of journeyings and matrimonial adventures on the part of the hero and his son, all ending disastrously. Lévi-Strauss suggests that the message which comes through is that matrilineal cross-cousin marriage in the patrilocal society of the people to whom the myth belongs leads to problems it cannot solve, and yet has to be accepted. (In a patrilocal society, children live in the father's village, but marriage must be with cousins on the mother's side, so that there will be pulls towards the mother's kin). It may be said that the myth is a very complicated way of bringing home what must already have been a pretty obvious fact. Against this, it might be said that the myth helps people to live with tensions which

they cannot escape; by symbolizing them in myth the tensions may seem less like brute facts to be resented and more like a fate to be accepted. Also I suspect that the complications of the myth are not only there in order to reiterate the same message; the imaginative story telling impulse has got going.

It may be, however, that the myth not only conveys the message that these tensions must be accepted and lived with; it also holds out a hope of a way in which they might actually be surmounted. Here contrasts, for instance between life and death, may be set out in the myth in a way which might lead not only to the contrast being accepted but to a hope that it might be surmounted. I believe that this hope of the resolution of opposition (not necessarily only that between life and death) is the concern of a good deal of religious myth; I do not know enough of the myths of all the world to say of *how* much. This is suggested by part at any rate of Lévi-Strauss' view.

This part is where he says that "the purpose of a myth is to provide a logical model capable of overcoming a contradiction" (*Structural Anthropology*, Chapter XI, p. 112). I do not find, however, that he in fact shows how myth provides a "logical model", beyond saying that it sets out contrasts expressed in bricolage language. One difficulty here is the different kinds of contrasts which are given. Some of these seem to be genuine binary oppositions: *p* and *not p*, where you can have one or the other, but not both. The myth may show attempts to get round the opposition, but they are defeated. In the *Geste d'Aswidal* the cross-cousin marriage has to be accepted; you cannot have it and not have it. And many oppositions, social as well as logical are starkly like this: either you may marry a woman of this group or you may not. Sometimes, on the other hand, Lévi-Strauss speaks of the oppositions as "dialectical". There is a Hegelian sound about this, and Hegel was of course trying to produce a dialectical logic, in which two opposed notions, thesis and antithesis, could be combined in a third, the synthesis. This depends on the possibility of showing the opposition between *p* and *not p* is not a straight contradiction, and that they can be rethought or reformulated in a new way that surmounts the contradiction. But if one says this, it is misleading to put the opposition in a formalized symbolism like *p* and *not p*. The possibility of overcoming the "contradiction" depends on seeing what is being said on each side, and whether it can be more carefully stated so as to avoid the ostensible contradiction. So "dialectical logic" is not a formal logic. There is indeed a pattern of progression from thesis – antithesis to synthesis, but the possibility of the progression will depend on the content of what is being said and not on its formal structure.

There is another trouble. It is sometimes said that dialectical thinking surmounts “contradictions” in the real world. I doubt whether we should talk about contradictions in the real world, as distinct from contradictory statements being made about it. And these can sometimes be genuine “*p* or *not p* but not both” oppositions: either you took that money out of the drawer or you did not. In these cases there is no third alternative. Sometimes, however a state of affairs can be described in two contrasting ways: “Yes, I did take the money out of the drawer (because I thought it might get stolen by one of the boys who was going to be about in the room). But I did not ‘take’ the money out of the drawer in the sense of stealing it. (I was keeping it safe and was intending to put it back later.)” In dealing with contradictory and ostensibly contradictory remarks about what is the case in the world, we have to see when they produce genuine contradictions, where you can’t have it both ways and when, with suitable rewording or change of emphasis you can get over an apparent contradiction. This is however not a matter of states of affairs, but of what is said about them.

In real affairs, we do not have contradictions (whatever Hegelians and Marxists may say). We have *conflicts*, what look like insoluble problems, or what are called “impossible situations” which does not mean logical impossibilities which are contradictions; if they were these, they could not occur, and alas! they do, but situations to which there is no satisfactory solution. In fact, something has to happen – you may “go out of the field” by leaving, or you may fight, or you may die, or you may refuse to speak, or you may patch up something temporarily (hence the “palliative rituals” of which I spoke in my last article).

I suggest one way of classifying myths (which is not of course Lévi-Strauss’, nor I imagine would he accept it) could be by trying to see whether they are (a) myths of resignation – i.e. they exhibit a tragic conflict which has to be accepted; or (b) wish-fulfilment myths, i.e. they produce a fantasy way of trying to get out of a conflict which in fact is of the (a) type; and (c) myths which suggest a possible way in which a conflict or apparent deadlock could indeed be overcome. But so long as we just look at the “superstructure”, the pattern of oppositions, I do not see how we could tell to which of these three a myth belongs. We should have to look for a substructure, a possible interpretation, and see what kind of conflicts the myth is symbolizing, and what it suggests is being or might be done about them.

Let us take an example from the mythology of our own tradition, and look at a passage in Irenaeus’ *Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching* (Chapter V, pp. 33, 34).

In speaking of Adam and of Christ, the “Second Adam”, Irenaeus says “It was necessary that Adam should be summed up in Christ, that mortality might be swallowed up and overwhelmed by immortality, and Eve summed up in Mary, that a virgin should be a virgin’s intercessor and a virgin’s obedience undo and put away the disobedience of a virgin”. And the trespass which came through the “tree of disobedience” in Eden had to be undone through the “tree of obedience” on Calvary.

We have here a pattern of contrasts between the Adam side and the “Second Adam” side; mortality is contrasted with immortality, and the disobedience of a virgin (Eve) contrasted with the obedience of a virgin (Mary); Also the act of disobedience and the act of obedience are both associated with “trees”:

First Adam	Second Adam
Disobedient virgin	Obedient Virgin
Disobedience over a tree	Obedience over a tree
Life lost	Life gained

A connection is being asserted between disobedience and life as lost, and obedience and life as gained. One side of the diagram mirrors the other in a way that might be said to be a simple reversal. But Irenaeus introduces a relation which is not just reversal; he calls this relation *anakephalaiosis*, generally translated “Recapitulation”. This word originally meant going over the steps of an argument again, and summing it up. As Irenaeus uses it, it means going over a situation again in a way which produces a positive instead of a negative outcome. So we have not just repetition, or just reversal, or just a synthesis of opposites, but yet another kind of contrast. It is not the situations as such which are repeated in the two stories, but situations providing analogous settings in which different attitudes of mind, one of disobedience in the former case and of obedience in the latter case, produce opposite outcomes. The “recapitulation” notion asserts that the second situation is undergone in order to reverse the state of affairs produced by the first, and would not have happened without it.

“Adam”, “Second Adam”, the virgins and the trees can be taken (by us, though no doubt not by Irenaeus) as pieces of bricolage language.

We are not concerned with what they stand for literally, but with the pattern. Which of our three ways of looking at the oppositions in a myth does this represent? On the tragic acceptance, the (a) view, we are left with a stark opposition. Disobedience spells death; and if we belong to disobedient mankind (Adam), that is that: Paradise is lost. On the wish-fulfilment, the (b) view, we could say the myth shows people trying to set up Paradise regained; guilt and death are contrasted with innocence and life, and the two sides are thought of as reversed. In the (c) view, we have not just reversal, but a going over again of the ground in what is seen as an analogous (not just repeated) situation, in a way which turns a former negative result into a positive one. This means that the negative result sets a problem to be surmounted by a fresh attempt made in an opposite attitude of mind. The outcome is a creative fresh situation, which could not have come about without the surmounting of the problem, and this, I think, is how the Adam – Second Adam story has generally been regarded.

Empirical examples of this notion of “Recapitulation” could be found where processes which go over the ground again with a reversed attitude produce a result in which a former negative result contributes to a final positive conclusion. One such might be the kind of psycho-therapy or psycho-analytic treatment in which a person lives through again, at least in imaginative recollection, some experience which has given him a phobia, and, by bringing to it the attitude of wanting to understand the experience instead of running away from it, he can overcome his fear. The outcome can be not only a mastery of the fear, but a better knowledge of himself and of other people than he could have had otherwise. So we have here an *anakephalaiosis*, a recapitulation, as a result of which the old experience can contribute to a richer kind of new experience. The pattern of repentance and forgiveness can be a similar enriching experience.

This brings me back to the connection of myth with ritual. A ritual can be a symbolic enactment of such an enrichment. It may not be: it may be simply a “vain repetition” of a symbolic action in an obsessive way, which is what some social psychologists think it always is (see my last article). But sometimes it may be an epitome in actual fact of what is symbolized, as in a genuine ritual of reconciliation, or in the death-like and life-renewing experience of penitence, confession and forgiveness. The Adam – Second Adam story has become the archetypal story of the possibility of a fresh start, and this stands behind the rituals of reconciliation and forgiveness in Christian tradition. Both the story, and the rituals following from it, claim to present us with more than just an imagined turning of the tables (death



being thought of as turned to life, misery to happiness). If this were all, it would be a wish-fulfilment myth, and the rituals associated with it would be the kind which in my last article I described as those which paper over the cracks in conflict situations without dealing with them. But in the reconciling kind of ritual, something like the reversal of a bad state of affairs through surmounting the conflict can be experienced. It may thus be an epitome of a process with a creative outcome. But the pattern here of the contrast between the negative state of affairs and the creative outcome is not the dialectical one of thesis – antithesis surmounted in a higher synthesis. It is the “Recapitulation” pattern, where the contrast consists in a bad state of affairs being gone over again in reality or imagination with a different attitude of mind, so that it is turned to good.

A ritual which achieves this can be one of the points at which the power which I believe religion is concerned with (see my first article), can be found at work. And if so, the interpretation of the ritual and of the myth associated with it can transcend its purely sociological function. The purely sociological message of the “Adam-Second Adam” myth might be that, whichever side of the opposition you look at, you see that you had better obey parental authority – the same message indeed that Fortes extracts from Oedipus and Job. Taking a more inward, and not only a sociological interpretation, the story suggests a pattern of “dying to live”, made creative through an attitude symbolized by “obedience”. I am not saying that this is the whole interpretation of the “Adam-Second Adam” story, and still less that this is what the long succession of people who contributed to writing it “really meant”. Neither can the enigma of the Resurrection be demythologized so easily into a general pattern of dying to live, nor possibly is it only myth. But its interpretation could include at least this.

Finally, Lévi-Strauss’ view that myth deals in contrast fits its being a way of presenting cosmic beliefs and aspirations at least as well as it fits the view that it is concerned with tensions in the social order. Myths tend to be created by people living closer to the stark contrasts of life and death, surfeit and hunger, than most people cushioned by Western civilization. If you live near to the starvation level, you may well see the universe divided into what is edible, and what is not, and this not only as a conventional distinction in social *mores* between permitted and non-permitted foods. Sometimes these oppositions can be surmounted by a creative effort; the non-edible can be made edible. Sometimes they are irreducible and must be accepted: the stones cannot be made bread. Myth invites us not just to acquiesce in the inevitability of conflicts or

to take refuge in compensatory dreams, but to struggle with the possibility of a creative issue. The Adam-Second Adam story, when its key terms of obedience and disobedience have been brought into intimate connection with people's inner development and their attitude to realities not bounded by their social relations, shows not how a former bad state of affairs may just be reversed (which may not be possible), but how it can lead to enrichment. *O felix culpa!*

#### REFERENCES

- [1] See B. Malinowski, *The Foundations of Faith and Morals*, Riddell Lectures, O.U.P. 1936.
- [2] The title of a book by Paul Radin, an anthropologist of an older generation.
- [3] *The Bear and the Barber*. Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute, 1963.

# Defining Myths: Shots at God

*John Barker*

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## I

A myth is an attempt to represent an essential situation. If it has any eternal universal significance it is because it contains an unchanging psychological reality, or perhaps an eternal conflict between religious and social values though in this case the myth tends to alter in different social situations; the important thing here being the interpretation of the myth and its capacity for reinterpretation.

This is a bald definition and demands some enlargement and qualification, especially in the face of science fiction, which some regard as the modern equivalent to myth, and the misuse of myth by many modern non-science-fiction writers.

A first question would be whether or not the originators of myth (and I am using the word in the non-derogatory sense) were conscious of what they were doing. I think they were not, and would suggest that the trouble today is that we are over-conscious of myth; that many modern writers are self-conscious and intimidated by literary and cultural history, and by the grandeur of old myths. I mean that the question of origin is not as important as the interpretations.

I am afraid of the way in which myth is used as something monumental and intimidating. Many literary critics have made it into this. Works like *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* are made into grandiose representations of huge Nature Gods, vegetation myths and all-powerful nature cycles. But all this is disgustingly cerebral; these interpretations are used in conjunction with words like "sterile" and "trivial" to describe modern life. That piece of monumentality – *The Wasteland* – is a typical work in this respect. There is a very personal, aesthetic disgust at modern life, and an equally aesthetic delight in the grandeur of the old myths. The emphasis is continually on myths being "perverted" in real life, a self-conscious delight in the wit of patronising comparisons between trips on the Thames and grand water and voyage myths.

As well as this "artistic snobbery", and the presentation of a single personal view as total reality, there is an evident cosmopolitan rootlessness about the poem. Eliot drags in myths from every possible source, and long footnotes are provided to explain his esoteric references, especially to Frazer's *Golden Bough*, the book that heralded anthropological snobbery. Ironically this cosmopolitanism is the very

thing that Eliot is attacking in the poem. Borges, the writer to whom I draw attention in the second part of this piece is, I suppose guilty of the same thing, but there is a strong element of the fantastic, and a superb lightness of touch totally lacking in Eliot and others.

Two important and related points emerge from this analysis, which are relevant to science fiction. There is this rootlessness, which suggests that myths need some genuine psychological and communal, perhaps racial, background. What is more noticeably lacking in *The Wasteland* is any reality, except a rather obtrusive spirituality. The mere collection makes myth unreal, and Eliot is forever stressing the unreality of modern life.

The other outstanding feature is the very personal quality of the poem (which has absurdly been called representative of the "impersonality of great art"). The personal disgust is unmistakable; it is of course in other writers like Celine, Pound etc. All these writers are described as having a "terrifying personal vision", which is also how a lot of science fiction gets described. It is exactly this "personal vision" that worries me; it lacks any larger "fundamental reality" and any genuine social context.

This lack is a part of the very nature of science fiction, and of the work of those people speculating on the edges of science. The distinction isn't always quite clear, as is shown in I. J. Good's "The Chief Entities" which appears in this issue. In this piece we are presented with what is virtually an objective reality, one as yet unperceived, with the suggestion that this reality of superintelligent machines with a single consciousness can pass messages to mystics; a take-over bid for contemporary religion by the technological prophets. But this unperceived ultimate reality is set out with a highly literal mechanical imagination.

What is impressive about this work is its commitment; there is none of the ironic evasion that Borges might be accused of. But it is still esoteric for the majority of us, and its monumentality is another myth. I have described the intimidation of contemporary life by anthropological snobbery and the weight of past cultures; in this work and others like it there is intimidation of the present by the future.

Also in an account of Arthur Clarke's *2001*, for which I am indebted to Leonard Rivett, there is the suggestion that it is a reworking of an old myth in prophetic technological terms. In this story the computer anti-hero had been created innocent but, "all too soon, a snake had entered his electronic Eden", a phrase not presented as a joke. It presents a mixture of the Odyssey myth of the wanderer and the myth of the rebirth; as with I. J. Good and the science fiction stories of Fred

Hoyle there are superintelligent entities somewhere in the universe. (In an appendix I add some notes supplied by Ted Bastin on Fred Hoyle's novels.)

There are imaginative ideas in these works, especially on the question of interplanetary communication and communication of superintelligences to man though the basic "superintelligence" is hardly more than an extension of pretty well worn ideas, and without the sophistication of many previous concepts. This is suggestive of the superiority of Borges. "Futuristic" really means a total break from what has gone before, and while it might be a little far fetched to suggest that the technology of these works is an extension of the symbolic concreteness of the visions of Plato in the *Timaeus* and Milton in the less good sections of *Paradise Lost*, it is obvious that in terms of essential human situation they are as conventional as the simplistic conception of the Christian God.

A Futurist like T. E. Hulme or Wyndham Lewis would say that this in itself involved a break with the past, that the very recognition of machines as an ultimate reality was a decisive step. But then they were writing fifty years ago. Their argument is only relevant to modern science fiction or speculations if we get the sense that the writers accept a reality that is opposite to all the values of the past. I would suggest that "superintelligences" do not do this, and there is too much philosophical crudity for their work to represent a threat to traditional human values. In fact they seem to ignore the point, not to have been aware of the problem. They make no evaluative or qualitative judgements about the new realities or symbols. That does in a way however make them rather difficult to deal with. They are assuming a reality outside the framework of human values or desires, and appear to be presenting this reality as a fact or as a possibility without saying whether it is desirable or not. That suggests that in this respect science fiction is very different from myth. But it can easily be reduced to over-literal hypothesis.

The other feature of science fiction and prophetic science is its non-dynamic quality. Most modern science fiction is very didactic. The future, empty of any complicated human experience is perfect ground for pattern makers, and those who have a point to make about society as a whole, or the world as it is now as a totality. In fact there doesn't seem to be so much of that. It is more simply didactic about things like colonialism and dangerous visionaries. With others there is the suggestion of the perfect blueprint, especially unpleasant because it is not looked at in terms of human-life needs. The blueprint allows for no interpretation or reinterpretation. This is especially true of Hoyle who

lays on the particulars and technical details to such an extent that there is nothing to interpret. Borges has more artistic discipline and just presents the skeletons of his patterns.

Both the blueprint and the didactic fantasy are non-dynamic, they cannot be altered or reinterpreted, because, while brilliant in their details and speculations, they are corny in their essentials. And they intimidate the present because they present a total future isolated from the present. Now the present batch of pessimists goes so far as to use science fiction as a medium, William Burrough's *nova Express* is an example, though in all his nihilism and self-indulgence there is a saving genius for humour. The two sides are united in taking over the future. The corny technological prophet and his parasite, the hack pessimist, are excavating, putting up their flags, making their claims for plots of the future. There is very little of it left now for any genuine talent. It is assumed that we will always be satisfied by the worn out, exhausted antithesis of the scientific autocrat and the conservative pessimist who hasn't had a single new idea since *Gulliver's Travels*. What is worst is the thought of the self-fulfilling prophecies, their very definiteness carrying along our passivity or complacent pessimism. The future itself is a God even more than it is for a rigid Marxist.

What is common to all these conceptions of God – the future itself, superintelligent machines, hack christianity (Jesus is God and God is his Father), God as a mathematician, as a practical joker (Gide?) – is that they involve a huge reduction. Borges recognizes this, and it is a premise for his synopsis style and love of symmetry. Also there is often a failure to distinguish between image and reality an acceptance of the shorthand as the reality, and with some of the science prophets an apparent failure to recognize the existence of these two separate things. Also the self-fulfilling assumption that the image carrying an air of absoluteness is all we can ever have.

The only genuine revolutionary attempt came from Nietzsche, whose overquoted assertion "God is dead" was a statement of fact that the Christian God simply wouldn't do any more, a statement that there was growing indifference to this venerable nonentity. He saw an ensuing sentimental nihilism, a growing neurotic belief that a certain nothing was better to an uncertain something.

I realise that one's attitude to this single great poet of modern times is likely to be largely determined by whether one lived through the Second World War or not. I didn't, and am lucky that I can value Nietzsche, because objectively I can see that Nietzsche as the Father of Nazism was the most unreal of distortions, that he was used by self-styled Gods who were so without Nietzsche's aid, who were,

moreover, tin Gods, in spite of his brilliant tirades against German nationalism. Nietzsche I think provided the warning against the kind of desperation that led to the pathetic Gods of Nazi ideology, and against the total poverty of values that was becoming increasingly apparent in his time, and which led to Nazism.

In one respect the idea of the Superman is corny, and is also a culmination to the glorification of man which was the hub of the Renaissance, it is also arrogant but the need for a recreation of values was so strong that philosophers were being downright irresponsible at this time. Also if it is corny, it is not a corny abuse of evolution. The idea of rank is very different to that. I think what Nietzsche was trying to assert was the ideal of the individual action and creation being socially meaningful, that what was done by individuals could only be of value if it could have a social ideal. Also there is an essential dynamic in his indifferent statement that there is growth and decay, that we shouldn't be afraid of it. Too often the idea that an absolute must change, will change, has been seen as a letting in of expediency.

I have throughout emphasised the dangers of intimidation by some abstracted absolute like the past, or the future, which leave the present as a vacuum; the dangers of being caught up in antitheses whose natures haven't undergone a single change in years, the fearful unwillingness to take present human needs and desires into account; the evacuation of the now; the total lack of confidence in our creative abilities which makes us grab at old myths and pick them to pieces, apply them here and there, and reinstate old Gods and create new ones who satisfy our personal fantasies; and the fatal belief that there no longer is an essential situation. Consequently Drama is made and accepted as peripheral, because it is believed that there is nothing essential to enact. That there is no reality and no possibilities which it is worth taking the risk for. The consequence is technological hypothesis, and the equally cerebral games myth, though Borges, who has a games myth, is genuine in representing a more shared experience of amused bewilderment, which can suddenly remove the floors we are standing on.

This is why I bring attention to him in the second part of this piece. In his work we are presented with skeletons which have the capacity for interpretation which I stressed earlier. Finally I would recommend the very coolness with which he presents his "speculations".

## II

The real humanist is by contemporary definition the pessimist, the man who recognizes the limitations of man, and who is content to do

his best within these limits. He stresses his own compassion in doing this, in denying the ideals which he feels are beyond man's capacities. But this pessimism has atrophied into a "conventional wisdom", as uncritical as the optimism of the nineteenth century.

These "compassionate pessimists" have much established myth behind them. There are, besides the biblical myths, their nineteenth century predecessors. Dostoevski's *Grand Inquisitor* – a very small fantasy of Ivan in a huge novel, *The Brothers Karamazov* – has been extracted and is a basis for the modern pessimist. The Inquisitor is the hero, and Christ the Liberator is the inhuman idealist, not realizing that man is not strong enough to be free.

Needless to say, the Inquisitor is an anti-hero. It is perhaps stating the obvious to say that we cannot take heroes any more, but the reason for this is important. Nobility and huge rises and falls in non-materialist terms are regarded as dangerous in a banal world. They were also seen as dangerous by the Greeks in tragedy, but this was balanced against the *possibility*, the chance of some contact with the divine world. Today's "tragedies" exclude the possibility and there is only a pompous tragi-comedy; the myth here, being one of an eternal, meaningless boredom. The myth of Sisyphus for instance.

Amongst all these boring and pompous writers, even Beckett and the later Camus, there is one excellent writer – J. L. Borges, whose brevity is almost his excellence.\* His style is to give a synopsis, résumé of novels that might have been written, arguing that writing a novel would be an extravagance. He also has a gift for hilarity, one of the good and unrecognized features of Kafka, a fellow allegoriser.

The brevity of these résumés is an essential factor of his works, because he is creating patterns largely uncluttered by naturalism. He appears to be *creating* myths, essences of a situation, not *using them*. But he is also undermining the very fantastic and speculative patterns that he makes. He is usually playing games, making obscure references, quoting esoteric books whose reality we can never be sure of. But this too is not accidental, for the game is his most important metaphor, or perhaps his reality.

The game theory of life is widely held nowadays, often by the old, and also by the "disillusioned" and precocious young. It is also part of the defence of the *status quo* ideology, the argument being that everyone is playing a game of one sort or another. The artist is playing the art game, the revolutionary the revolution game. It is of course yet

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\* Jorge Luis Borges. *Fictions*, 6s. 6d., and *A Personal Anthology*, 30s. Both published by Calder; the latter also by Grove Press Inc., New York.



another brilliant rationalisation of the mediocre and sterile present, for no game is better than any other.

Borges is a lot better than this, a lot better than the banal pop psychology of *Games People Play* for instance. His fantastic imagination is elating and the brevity prevents the deadweight cynicism of many uses of the games myth. There is for example the story of Pierre Menard trying to rewrite Don Quixote word for word – a monumental task since the time between him and Cervantes has changed attitudes and styles so greatly. There is the man who discovers that God came to earth as Judas; that this constituted a far greater sacrifice and that it made God more of a man, and he then recognizes that the indifference to his theory is a sign that God doesn't want his secret revealed. He also takes on the most game-like form of literature – the detective story – in *The Garden of the Forking Paths*, *Theme of the Traitor and the Hero*, and takes it to its logical conclusion in *Death and the Compass*. In this piece the brilliant detective perceives a most obscure symmetry in a series of crimes and goes to solve them by predicting exactly the location and time of the next crime. But the game had been planned by a genius criminal whose knowledge of the detective's fascination and intuition for pattern made him set up these previous crimes to lead the detective to a place where he could be murdered.

The position of the game, then, is ambiguous. It is a reality, yet pattern is dangerous it can be manipulated, even totalitarian. The very first piece – *Tlon, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius* is the story of the detection of a complete encyclopaedia purporting to be produced by a dead, obscure race in South America, but in fact coming from a paranoid millionaire trying to create a world.

In what is perhaps the most important piece, *The Babylonian Lottery* he describes with brilliant mock-scientific observation a theory of the game in the form of a complex lottery. The "author" explains the planned uncertainty of life there. To be attractive to the whole populace it meant that there had to be losers as well as winners. It develops until tickets do not have to be bought, and the profit and loss is made in non-pecuniary terms, thus the "almost atrocious variety of life". The company running it becomes mysterious and hidden until we have a complete metaphor of life, with the Company playing the role of the Grand Inquisitor.

The reality of the "historical" account is maintained throughout the piece. The whole thing is rapidly multiplied and built up, its planning becomes increasingly complex, and increasingly aimed at increasing chance, things are made deliberately more uncertain, and the company

takes on a God-like position with the lottery as ritual. The final assertion is that “Babylonia is nothing but an infinite game of chance”. It is an intricate pattern, but one to create the arbitrary.

Once again the attitude to the game is equivocal, the totalitarian nightmare that is a part of our “conventional wisdom” is there, but more important the feeling that this is the reality of all life, that we are all playing games, however complex and invisible they are. It is then a myth of some importance – time and progress are undermined, the wise men on top of the mountain see us as absurd and are amused yet compassionate. There is also the anti-totalitarian line, but more witty and totally undermining than the usual safe diatribes.

But perhaps what is most important is the very style which I stressed at the beginning. The pattern is itself the myth, and anything that looks like a context of naturalistic content is ironic. Great literature of the past has used myth, and while keeping the essence of the myth has interpreted it, and, more important, dramatised it. By this I do not mean made it naturalistic or localised, dwelling more on detail or individual psychology, but the actual enactment of a myth by very universal characters. From the nineteenth century onwards dramatists have tended to deal with particular individuals hoping that their significance would radiate outwards. Unfortunately in most cases this does not happen.

Nietzsche describes it well in *The Birth of Tragedy* when he complains . . .

“Character must no longer be broadened so as to become a permanent type, but on the contrary must be so finely individualized by means of shading and nuances and the strict delineation of every trait that the spectator ceases to be aware of myth at all and comes to focus on the amazing lifelikeness of the characters and the artist’s powers of imitation”.

Imitation is trivial and feeble. Also, if that is our only interest we are being “irresponsibly aesthetic” as Jaspers put it. But this can equally well apply to a love for the symmetry of a myth and perhaps also to the artistic perfection of Borges’ shorthand. Real dramatization does not obscure the myth but neither does it give a slick presentation of this; it does give us also a sense of the grandeur in suffering, and of the possibilities – the wider context of a fundamental reality.

The great example of this is the treatment of the essential Judaic-Christian myth of the Fall in Milton’s *Paradise Lost*. It is a poem which represents man at his greatest, especially in Book IV, and is far

better than *Prometheus Unbound* or any other similar visionary work, because it is virtually impossible to be ecstatic in English without sounding ridiculous, and because Milton brought his great intelligence into his poem. What he dared to do – to describe man in a perfect state – was audacious and of great importance. He is imaginative about perfection, it is not a corny immobile bliss, but a dramatization of a perfect relationship between a man and a woman. What ought to have been a theologically didactic work, what ought to have been a straight interpretation, was something entirely different because he conceived of the myth dramatically. Adam and Eve are made noble and dignified, the relationship between them based on their equality and independence is beautiful and strong, and their Fall becomes tragic because there is this wider context.

But in the modern myth it is the pattern and the idea which are all important. There is also no context of fundamental human reality, thus the myth of the Grand Inquisitor is essentially dialectic. Men become pawns whether the game is totalitarian or anti-totalitarian. In modern literature the myth is a pattern rather than a drama, and is thus more rigidly itself. It may be that in the depths of his irony Borges is satirizing this.

*Note on Fred Hoyle's Science Fiction (supplied by Ted Bastin)*

In Fred Hoyle's science fiction it is possible to tease out a small set of strands which are essential to his shot at God. They are best set out as a list.

- (1) Superintelligences in the cosmos.
- (2) Conjectures about time.
- (3) Computer analogies.
- (4) The numinous – Sex?
- (5) Evolution – particularly of the central nervous system.
- (6) Information coding.
- (7) Visio Dei.

*The Novels* draw on selections of these strands, thus:

*The Black Cloud.* Adds (6) to the mixture and brings out Hoyle's dualism through his use of a coding notion with human intelligence being constituted from a standard computing machine with a variable coded message. He has a transmigration of intelligences, but I am not

sure whether of souls, since I can't remember whether personal characteristics came over.

*October 1 is too late.* The super intelligences use (2) in addition to all the rest except (7) which is not exactly dropped but from which the evolutionary branch in which we find ourselves is liable to exclude us. Indeed the decision Hoyle's characters have finally to make is whether to live in what is known to be a blind alley with no hope of (7) or to go back to an earlier stage where this is in fact the case though we don't know it and go on in the hope of (7). There may however be other entities that may legitimately hope for (7).

Hoyle's shot at God poses two general scientific questions, answers to which or significant discussion of which might get our ideas on God a bit clearer.

*Central Nervous System structure.* The Black Cloud has no long range order in its C.N.S. which is also its soma, and Hoyle suggests that this would be an advantage over the familiar C.N.S. with nerves, skeletal tissue and so on. Presumably we are meant to imagine that electromagnetic communication channels set themselves up, and it might be worthwhile looking more closely into conditions under which this could happen. I have a feeling that within a wide range of conditions these communications channels would reduce to having mechanical structure (also electromagnetic of course but with long range order defined). However, even if this could be shown to be so, the proof might give us a new insight.

*Time.* Hoyle has a discrete time in "October 1 is too late" with memories which, to the experient are not distinguishable from the real time sequence determined by coded information from the superintelligences. Hoyle uses all the elements of Wells' *Time Machine* together with the ideas of Dunne's *Experiment with Time*. He avoids the vicious circularity\* of Dunne's argument with his flow of coded information from super intelligences, but fails to define the concept of the *real present* as distinct from what we might call the "dream present" – i.e. the present in the time sequence that has been constructed. Hoyle clearly needs to assume some property of self determination in the "original" or "real" time process, since otherwise whether or not you get into a dead-end in the evolutionary process would be a fiat of the super intelligences. Perhaps the real present could be defined in terms of openness to evolution, but this is not said.

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\* "vicious" to distinguish it from the venial circularity of Newton's laws of motion.

# The Circular Ruins \*

## *Jorge Luis Borges*

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And if he left off dreaming about you . . .  
*Through the Looking Glass, VI.*

No one saw him disembark in the unanimous night, no one saw the bamboo canoe sink into the sacred mud, but in a few days there was no one who did not know that the taciturn man came from the South and that his home had been one of those numberless villages upstream in the deeply cleft side of the mountain, where the Zend language has not been contaminated by Greek and where leprosy is infrequent. What is certain is that the grey man kissed the mud, climbed up the bank without pushing aside (probably, without feeling) the blades which were lacerating his flesh, and crawled, nauseated and bloodstained, up to the circular enclosure crowned with a stone tiger or horse, which sometimes was the colour of flame and now was that of ashes. This circle was a temple which had been devoured by ancient fires, profaned by the miasmal jungle, and whose god no longer received the homage of men. The stranger stretched himself out beneath the pedestal. He was awakened by the sun high overhead. He was not astonished to find that his wounds had healed; he closed his pallid eyes and slept, not through weakness of flesh but through determination of will. He knew that this temple was the place required for his invincible intent; he knew that the incessant trees had not succeeded in strangling the ruins of another propitious temple downstream which had once belonged to gods now burned and dead; he knew that his immediate obligation was to dream. Towards midnight he was awakened by the inconsolable shriek of a bird. Tracks of bare feet, some figs and a jug warned him that the men of the region had been spying respectfully on his sleep, soliciting his protection or afraid of his magic. He felt a chill of fear, and sought out a sepulchral niche in the dilapidated wall where he concealed himself among unfamiliar leaves.

The purpose which guided him was not impossible, though supernatural. He wanted to dream a man; he wanted to dream him in

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minute entirety and impose him on reality. This magic project had exhausted the entire expanse of his mind; if someone had asked him his name or to relate some event of his former life, he would not have been able to give an answer. This uninhabited, ruined temple suited him, for it contained a minimum of visible world; the proximity of the workmen also suited him, for they took it upon themselves to provide for his frugal needs. The rice and fruit they brought him were nourishment enough for his body, which was consecrated to the sole task of sleeping and dreaming.

At first, his dreams were chaotic; then in a short while they became dialectic in nature. The stranger dreamed that he was in the centre of a circular amphitheatre which was more or less the burnt temple; clouds of taciturn students filled the tiers of seats; the faces of the farthest ones hung at a distance of many centuries and as high as the stars, but their features were completely precise. The man lectured his pupils on anatomy, cosmography, and magic: the faces listened anxiously and tried to answer understandingly, as if they guessed the importance of that examination which would redeem one of them from his condition of empty illusion and interpolate him into the real world. Asleep or awake, the man thought over the answers of his phantoms, did not allow himself to be deceived by impostors, and in certain perplexities he sensed a growing intelligence. He was seeking a soul worthy of participating in the universe.

After nine or ten nights he understood with a certain bitterness that he could expect nothing from those pupils who accepted his doctrine passively, but that he could expect something from those who occasionally dared to oppose him. The former group, although worthy of love and affection, could not ascend to the level of individuals; the latter pre-existed to a slightly greater degree. One afternoon (now afternoons were also given over to sleep, now he was only awake for a couple of hours at daybreak) he dismissed the vast illusory student body for good and kept only one pupil. He was a taciturn, sallow boy, at times intractable, and whose sharp features resembled those of his dreamer. The brusque elimination of his fellow students did not disconcert him for long; after a few private lessons, his progress was enough to astound the teacher. Nevertheless, a catastrophe took place. One day, the man emerged from his sleep as if from a viscous desert, looked at the useless afternoon light which he immediately confused with the dawn, and understood that he had not dreamed. All that night and all day long, the intolerable lucidity of insomnia fell upon him. He tried exploring the forest, to lose his strength; among the hemlock he barely succeeded in experiencing several short snatches of sleep, veined

with fleeting, rudimentary visions that were useless. He tried to assemble the student body but scarcely had he articulated a few brief words of exhortation when it became deformed and was then erased. In his almost perpetual vigil, tears of anger burned his old eyes.

He understood that modelling the incoherent and vertiginous matter of which dreams are composed was the most difficult task that a man could undertake, even though he should penetrate all the enigmas of a superior and inferior order; much more difficult than weaving a rope out of sand or coining the faceless wind. He swore he would forget the enormous hallucination which had thrown him off at first, and he sought another method of work. Before putting it into execution, he spent a month recovering his strength, which had been squandered by his delirium. He abandoned all premeditation of dreaming and almost immediately succeeded in sleeping a reasonable part of each day. The few times that he had dreams during this period, he paid no attention to them. Before resuming his task, he waited until the moon's disk was perfect. Then, in the afternoon, he purified himself in the waters of the river, worshipped the planetary gods, pronounced the prescribed syllables of a mighty name, and went to sleep. He dreamed almost immediately, with his heart throbbing.

He dreamed that it was warm, secret, about the size of a clenched fist, and of a garnet colour within the penumbra of a human body as yet without face or sex; during fourteen lucid nights he dreamt of it with meticulous love. Every night he perceived it more clearly. He did not touch it; he only permitted himself to witness it, to observe it, and occasionally to rectify it with a glance. He perceived it and lived it from all angles and distances. On the fourteenth night he lightly touched the pulmonary artery with his index finger, then the whole heart, outside and inside. He was satisfied with the examination. He deliberately did not dream for a night; he then took up the heart again, invoked the name of a planet, and undertook the vision of another of the principal organs. Within a year he had come to the skeleton and the eyelids. The innumerable hair was perhaps the most difficult task. He dreamed an entire man – a young man, but who did not sit up or talk, who was unable to open his eyes. Night after night, the man dreamt him asleep.

In the Gnostic cosmogonies, demiurges fashion a red Adam who cannot stand; as clumsy, crude and elemental as this Adam of dust was the Adam of dreams forged by the wizard's nights. One afternoon, the man almost destroyed his entire work, but then changed his mind. (It would have been better had he destroyed it.) When he had exhausted all supplications to the deities of the earth, he threw himself at the feet of the effigy which was perhaps a tiger or perhaps a colt and implored its

unknown help. That evening, at twilight, he dreamt of the statue. He dreamt it was alive, tremulous: it was not an atrocious bastard of a tiger and a colt, but at the same time these two fiery creatures and also a bull, a rose, and a storm. This multiple god revealed to him that his earthly name was Fire, and that in this circular temple (and in others like it) people had once made sacrifices to him and worshipped him, and that he would magically animate the dreamed phantom, in such a way that all creatures, except Fire itself and the dreamer, would believe it to be a man of flesh and blood. He commanded that once this man had been instructed in all the rites, he should be sent to the other ruined temple whose pyramids were still standing downstream, so that some voice would glorify him in that deserted edifice. In the dream of the man that dreamed, the dreamed one woke.

The wizard carried out the orders he had been given. He devoted a certain length of time (which finally proved to be two years) to instructing him in the mysteries of the universe and the cult of fire. Secretly, he was pained at the idea of being separated from him. On the pretext of pedagogical necessity, each day he increased the number of hours dedicated to dreaming. He also remade the right shoulder, which was somewhat defective. At times, he was disturbed by the impression that all this had already happened. . . . In general, his days were happy; when he closed his eyes, he thought: *Now I will be with my son.* Or more rarely: *The son I have engendered is waiting for me and will not exist if I do not go to him.*

Gradually, he began accustoming him to reality. Once he ordered him to place a flag on a faraway peak. The next day the flag was fluttering on the peak. He tried other analogous experiments, each time more audacious. With a certain bitterness, he understood that his son was ready to be born – and perhaps impatient. That night he kissed him for the first time and sent him off to the other temple whose remains were turning white downstream, across many miles of inextricable jungle and marshes. Before doing this (and so that his son should never know that he was a phantom, so that he should think himself a man like any other) he destroyed in him all memory of his years of apprenticeship.

His victory and peace became blurred with boredom. In the twilight times of dusk and dawn, he would prostrate himself before the stone figure, perhaps imagining his unreal son carrying out identical rites in other circular ruins downstream; at night he no longer dreamed, or dreamed as any man does. His perceptions of the sounds and forms of the universe became somewhat pallid: his absent son was being nourished by these diminutions of his soul. The purpose of his life had



been fulfilled; the man remained in a kind of ecstasy. After a certain time, which some chroniclers prefer to compute in years and others in decades, two oarsmen awoke him at midnight; he could not see their faces, but they spoke to him of a charmed man in a temple of the North, capable of walking on fire without burning himself. The wizard suddenly remembered the words of the god. He remembered that of all the creatures that people the earth, Fire was the only one who knew his son to be a phantom. This memory, which at first calmed him, ended by tormenting him. He feared lest his son should meditate on this abnormal privilege and by some means find out he was a mere simulacrum. Not to be a man, to be a projection of another man's dreams – what an incomparable humiliation, what madness! Any father is interested in the sons he has procreated (or permitted) out of the mere confusion of happiness; it was natural that the wizard should fear for the future of that son whom he had thought out entrail by entrail, feature by feature, in a thousand and one secret nights.

His misgivings ended abruptly, but not without certain forewarnings. First (after a long drought) a remote cloud, as light as a bird, appeared on a hill; then, towards the South, the sky took on the rose colour of leopard's gums; then came clouds of smoke which rusted the metal of the nights; afterwards came the panic-stricken flight of wild animals. For what had happened many centuries before was repeating itself. The ruins of the sanctuary of the god of Fire was destroyed by fire. In a dawn without birds, the wizard saw the concentric fire licking the walls. For a moment, he thought of taking refuge in the water, but then he understood that death was coming to crown his old age and absolve him from his labours. He walked towards the sheets of flame. They did not bite his flesh, they caressed him and flooded him without heat of combustion. With relief, with humiliation, with terror, he understood that he also was an illusion, that someone else was dreaming him.

*Translated by Anthony Bonner*

# The Chief Entities

*I. J. Good*

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For thousands of years people have speculated about the existence of extraterrestrial life. In ancient times it was thought to consist of gods and angels, whereas devils were thought to be intraterrestrial. Perhaps my own speculations have in some respects an ancient ring, but they are based on scientific rather than religious reasoning. Soon we might obtain some of the answers by direct observation, and then it will be too late to speculate.

Among other things, my arguments suggest that if it is ever practicable to explore the *galaxy*, we shall probably find ultraintelligent life in the *solar system*.

The problem of defining life has always been of philosophical interest, and on the whole there has been general agreement whether a given entity is alive. But the linguistic problem of whether to say that a thing is living is going to become more difficult in the future, owing to advances in cybernetics and biological engineering.

When speculating concerning extraterrestrial life, a definition is required even more. On earth, the possession of DNA as a controlling genetic chemical might be a reasonable defining property, since it occurs in all known life-forms; but it would be geomorphic to insist on it for extraterrestrial life. Perhaps it would be better to say that a thing is living if its development depends on large molecules containing genetic codes.

A chemical definition of life might be too narrow, and some would feel that a more functional definition would be appropriate. Of the three "self" properties – self-repair, self-replication and self-preservation – the last seems the most important. If a thing is subjected to a great variety of dangers and overcomes them by a great variety of different acts, then it *might* qualify as a living thing; certainly it would qualify as an "org". (This term was coined in recent years and means an organism or organization.) Perhaps we should insist on both a genetic code and adaptive self-preservation in our definition of life.

It is difficult to agree that any cogwheel machine, however clever it might be, would qualify as living; could it be conscious and capable of feeling pleasure and pain? Maybe any sufficiently complicated information-handling system would be conscious, even if it were purely mechanical. But many of us feel, as a metaphysical matter, that

consciousness cannot have a purely mechanical basis and must depend on more than Newtonian physics.

Although a reference to consciousness as the main ingredient of life might be considered to be in bad taste by the high priests of materialism and irrelevant to the progress of science, it seems to me to be an issue that cannot be lightly sneezed upon; suppose we find that the back of the moon is inhabited by elaborate cogwheel machines or other orgs judged by us to be robots. If we regarded these orgs as dangerous to human colonization of the moon, we would be tempted to destroy most of them, keeping only a few in captivity for research purposes. We would do so with a much better conscience if we believed they were not conscious. We might do so anyway and learn to live with a bad conscience. Even if consciousness and real metaphysical pain are irrelevant to science, which is doubtful, they are at any rate relevant to ethics, including the ethics of interplanetary politics; but our galactic politics will probably be decided more by fear of retaliation than by ethics, until we reach cosmic maturity.

### *Ultraintelligent Machines*

Real metaphysical consciousness might be relevant to science for the construction of the first ultraintelligent machine. By an "ultraintelligent" machine, I mean one that can do every intellectual feat better than any man. I am inclined to believe that such a machine will be constructed before the end of this century, using advanced electronic and optical techniques. I think the machine could be trained to become independent of its operator, but it is possible that it would not be properly motivated unless the operator remained in control.

The notion of an ultraintelligent machine will be relevant later on, so let us consider it in a little more detail. After the first ultraintelligent machine is built, the designs of far better and more economical ones can be handed over to the machine and its progeny, apart perhaps from some ethical guidance from a human committee. Clearly, there will then be an intelligence explosion. This will lead to extraordinarily rapid advances in medicine, space research, social science, and in every other branch of science.

To say that a man *runs* like a machine is a compliment; before long it will be a compliment to say that he *thinks* like one.

It might be objected that machines cannot be expected to be creative. But creativity consists in putting ideas together in an unexpected manner, and once we have analyzed, perhaps linguistically, how ideas can be put together, we can begin putting pairs of ideas

together in very large numbers by machine. If we can also solve the problem of testing whether the results are useful, then there will be no obstacle left. People put ideas together faster than is sometimes appreciated especially in the visual system, where it is done without effort. I believe an explanation will be found in the cell assembly and subassembly theories of the mind.

In order to consider how much intelligent life there might be in the universe it is necessary to remind ourselves of its size and some other of its features. First, let us get our distance scale in focus. We are about eight "light-minutes" from the sun – that is, about 90,000,000 miles – whereas Pluto, which is the farthest out of the known planets, is about forty times as far; and the nearest star is about 6,000 times as far away again. The diameter of our galaxy is about 20,000 times the distance to the nearest star; in fact it is about 80,000 light-years. The nearest full-size galaxy to our own is about a million light-years away; and the farthest one so far observed is a few thousand times as far away again; in fact its distance is believed to be a sizeable fraction of the radius of the whole "observable" universe.

The universe contains about  $10^{10}$  (10,000,000,000) galaxies and about  $10^{21}$  stars – all in immense space. But presumably most space travel by men, during the next fifty years, will be confined to the vicinity of our solar system. Even if a space-ship runs out of fuel and drifts out into the black depths of galactic space, it would take at least 10,000 years to get as far away as the nearest star. One might think, then, that interstellar travel is quite out of the question, but it should be remembered that technology started only a few hundred years ago, and even the human race is only twenty million years old according to the latest estimate. Interstellar travel might be quite easy for a civilization that is old by galactic standards.

Sherlock Holmes once remarked that if only one hypothesis fits the facts, then it must be true, however improbable it was initially. In this spirit some theories have been put forward for the origin of the solar system; for example, the origin was attributed by Jeans and Jeffreys to the near passage to the sun of another star. This theory is initially improbable since the distances between the stars are so great and is no longer generally believed since the gaseous streamers would not condense into planets. An initially much more probable theory is that the sun and all the planets were formed by condensation of a rotating gaseous nebula. Holmes' principle is true but misleading; in practice, if the only theory you can *think of* is initially very improbable, then the chances are you have simply overlooked something. Holmes himself never overlooked anything; at least that's Conan Doyle's story. At

present, the nebular hypotheses are the most popular among professional astronomers.

It used to be thought that nearly all stars were isolated and that the sun was exceptional; but it is now known that about 80 per cent. of the stars in our vicinity are parts of multiple systems such as double stars, and at least one star has a non-luminous body going round it, as can be seen by variations in the linearity of its path. Now if a planet were associated with a double star it would be unlikely to be a suitable abode for life because the variations in temperature would be great; but the fact that there *are* so many double stars is indirect evidence for the existence of planetary systems around single stars. Moreover, one star has been noticed whose spectrum is what would be expected if it were surrounded by a gaseous nebula.

The current view is that in our galaxy alone there are probably at least a billion planetary systems. Moreover there is a magnetohydrodynamic theory of the origin of the solar system, due to Alfvén, which, if correct, would imply that most stars of the size of the sun would have *similar* planetary systems. This theory is not generally accepted since the magnetohydrodynamic equations are too difficult to work with. The fact that a simple rule, due to Titius and known as Bode's law, gives a good approximation to the relative distances of seven of the planets and of the mean distance of the asteroids from the sun is an indication that there is something rather natural about the origin of the solar system. One's first impression that the planets are spread around higgledy-piggledy appears to be incorrect.

Some fifty years ago it was frequently said that life is so fantastically unlikely that it could not have developed anywhere except on earth. In 1850 it was usually assumed that each species required a separate act of creation, and it was dangerous to deny it. The most common view among professional biologists today is that life is very likely to develop when the conditions are right and that no great coincidences are required. This view is further supported by the adaptability of life on earth under a variety of hostile conditions, an adaptability that is at first sight amazing. Moreover there is evidence, not yet universally accepted, that some meteorites contain primitive organisms, so that the view that life is a great fluke has been further undermined.

#### *Advanced Civilization*

The development of life on earth exhibits a tendency to assume forms of greater and greater complexity. Let's call this the "Fourth

**Law of Thermodynamics”**, since the **Second Law** states that isolated physical systems tend to a state in which no work gets done. If a living organism is isolated, the best it can hope for is suspended animation, as in a deep freeze.

In virtue of the **Fourth Law of Thermodynamics** we can expect a reasonable proportion of planets in our galaxy, where large life-forms have developed, to possess advanced civilizations. (The life-forms presumably must be large, like humans, to have a prospect of great intelligence.) Nearly all the civilizations that have attained a level of technology as advanced as our own “civilization” will have done so many millions of years ago, since a million years is a very short time in comparison with the age of the galaxy.

If a civilization were 100,000,000 years ahead of our own uncivilization it would have invented the ultraintelligent machine about 100,000,000 years ago, unless it were prevented from doing so by a galactic police force. Within 1,000 years of this invention the technology would be unimaginable to us – let alone within 100,000,000 years. Among the inventions made within the first thousand years might well be methods of prolonging life almost indefinitely by the replacement and rejuvenation of parts; or the creation of ultraintelligent life-forms; or the construction of space-ships that could travel with a speed comparable to that of light. The ultraintelligent machines will also have helped to keep the peace and to stabilize the social system. They will create social problems but will also produce the solutions of those problems.

These guesses are too optimistic in at least one respect, since many of these civilizations will have allowed the **Second Law of Thermodynamics** to win out against the **Fourth Law**, either through internal strife or because the civilizations became redundant after inventing their ultraintelligent machines. A certain fraction of advanced civilizations will have failed to achieve a planetary government and will therefore of course have annihilated themselves. But there must be a reasonable fraction, say 10 per cent. at least, where a planetary government was evolved. Of these, some will have become too corrupt to bother about their descendants, and will have used up the natural resources of their planets within a few centuries. But again a reasonable fraction, say at least 10 per cent., will be sufficiently forward-looking to avoid this, especially as the individuals will be long-lived. In most cases, ultraintelligent machines will have been built within say a century of the widespread use of electronics and lasers. The collection of ultraintelligent machines would soon have achieved the status of an oracle and its advice would have been accepted even by the most stupid

of politicians. Thus united planetary governments would have become established.

It therefore seems safe to assume that a small but by no means negligible proportion of advanced civilizations will have survived. Since there were probably thousands of millions of advanced civilizations in our galaxy, even a small proportion of survivors would be a large number. And even if there had originally been only 1,000, a figure far lower than most scientists who have considered the matter recently have suggested, probably at least one of them would have survived.

A race of beings, each of whom is almost immortal, would be prepared to plan millions of years ahead and would have been able to colonize the entire galaxy. It would not be necessary for any one being to travel more than a few light years in order that the entire galaxy should be explored. Pioneers from distinct civilizations might have come into conflict, but by now these conflicts would have been resolved, and a stable United Worlds Organization must have been established. Strong evidence for this is the fact that we ourselves have not yet been annihilated by extraterrestrial entities. They probably have evolved an instinct of peaceability as well as a police force. It is already known that the aggressiveness of monkeys can be controlled by means of electrodes placed in a certain part of their cerebral cortices, so presumably aggressiveness can be controlled even in homo self-styled "sapiens".

In our vicinity the average distance between stars is about ten light years. Near the centre of the galaxy it is only about one light year. Hence the population density near the centre is presumably about a thousand ( $10 \times 10 \times 10$ ) times what it is in our vicinity. (Not 10; space is three-dimensional.) Moreover there might have been a great deal of migration to the centre in order to be in the heart of things, just as there is a tendency on earth for people to migrate towards large cities.

There is little reason to suppose that all the Top Beings would be of the same species. Even if they were all descended from the same species in the first place, they would have had hundreds of millions of years in which to differentiate into a great variety of species and genera – if these terms are not too geomorphic – by the processes of natural selection and artificial selection. So we can assume, with reasonable confidence, that the United Worlds Organization is sympathetic to all forms of life. Perhaps it would be better to talk about the Chief Entities rather than the Top Beings, since they might be machines, or a hybrid between machines and living beings, "biomachines" as it were. Perhaps biomachines would be more sympathetic to all forms of life than purely biological things would be. A biomachine would probably not be much

**Concerned about the colour or even the shape of other biomachines.**

**If we assume that the universe is populated like this, the next question is: "how would the universe be colonized?" Space travel might be extremely boring, so civilizations could either send out complete villages in very large space-ships, or they could put fertilized ova into deep freeze and then space-ships of moderate size would be adequate. When the ship arrives at a suitable habitat their ultraintelligent machines could thaw out the ova, incubate them, bring them up and educate them. If it were not for the fact of evolution on earth, we could conjecture that Adam and Eve were Top Beings, at any rate before the fall! As it is, it is somewhat more likely that Christ was a Top Being.**

**It is not essential that all the Chief Entities should live on planets; many of them might live in artificially constructed space stations for some of the time. And these stations would be useful for relaying radio, laser, or telepathic communications. Some of their space-craft might be very small, and be inhabited by pico-micro-miniaturized ultraintelligent machines. An advantage of small space-craft is that they could land on strange planets, such as our earth, and could take off again with a small expenditure of energy.**

**What experiments should we perform to detect the presence of the Chief Entities? Some radio listening has been tried on a wave-length of 21 cm., which happens to be suitable for interstellar communication. These experiments are more pertinent for communication with advanced civilizations as such rather than with the Chief Entities. The Chief Entities will make their presence known when they see fit.**

### *The Galactic Zoo*

**What then are the Chief Entities waiting for? We have agreed that they have not occupied the earth because they are lovers of peace. Then why don't they announce their existence in order to encourage peace on earth? Perhaps we are part of the galactic zoo and are good material for doctoral theses. If they were to intervene it would bias their statistics. But we should not complain, since it is better to live on a preserve than in a jungle.**

**There can be little doubt that we have been under regular observation ever since we started using radio. We are in a very interesting and unusual condition, since we are going to build an ultraintelligent machine within the next few decades. Soon after we have done so, the Chief Entities will be forced to announce their presence since we are otherwise liable to become obstreperous. The Chief Entities will have excellent judgment concerning our probable**



future behaviour, partly because of their unimaginably great intelligence, and partly because of their vast experience of other emergent civilizations. By their experience alone they might know that it is unwise to announce their presence unambiguously to primitive cultures: to do so might undermine our existing motivations for working and lead to chaos. They might be waiting for the ultraintelligent machines to take over, especially if they themselves are machines!

On the face of it, the Chief Entities have an acute problem of communication between themselves, because light and radio signals travel very slowly; one message between two planetary systems would take years. A centralized galactic government would be exceedingly unwieldy if its communications took thousands of years. Thousands of years are not much compared with the age of the galaxy, but if we were left to our own devices for such a time there is no knowing what crimes we might commit in the name of high ideals and undefined abstractions; the real motivation is the unconscious lust for power on the parts of the politicians. Accordingly we can reasonably presume that the galactic government is highly decentralized. It is ancient enough to have developed a fixed but viable constitution, copies of which would be widely distributed. I have assumed for the moment that no informative signals can travel faster than light, as has been generally believed since the acceptance of the Special Theory of Relativity. But there are more things in the universe and in the galaxy than were dreamed of in Einstein's philosophy.

At all times in the history of science a large fraction of professional scientists, in their collective arrogance, have strongly believed that we were close to the whole truth and nothing but the truth concerning the fundamental laws of nature. (Collective arrogance is a kind of trade union activity, is commoner than personal arrogance, is generally considered to be less noxious, and is more so.) Laplace, for example, thought the entire future could in principle be predicted if we knew the positions and velocities of all particles of matter. This form of billiard-ball materialism is now hotly denied by most quantum-mechanical physicists. The "miracles" that have occurred since Laplace's time, some of which were not even predicted in science fiction, let alone by the professors who wished to be respected for their common-sense administrative ability, include (i) radio and, in particular, transatlantic radio which was declared impossible in a court of law by a professor of physics when it was first claimed by Marconi; (ii) the clock paradox that if you take a round trip with nearly the speed of light you return younger than those who stayed behind; (iii)

atomic energy, whose economic use was declared impossible by Rutherford himself; (iv) lasers ("death-rays" were predicted even in *bad science fiction*); and (v) satellite communication, predicted by Arthur Clarke in 1945, although the British Astronomer Royal said space travel was bilge a few years later.

We *might* be close to the whole truth in physics, but to believe this with much confidence is entirely unjustifiable. Although quantum mechanics is a very successful theory, its implications are more fantastic than any self-consistent science fiction, and in fact quantum mechanics is probably self-contradictory and therefore strictly wrong. Moreover, there are many simple and important unsolved problems which could eventually be subsumed under physics; for example, the nature of quasars, why the proton is so much heavier than the electron, the nature of consciousness, and whether telepathy is possible.

Let us then reconsider the possibility of signalling faster than light. This is not strictly ruled out by the Special Theory of Relativity as is often thought. What this theory implies is that if a signal travels faster than light to one observer, then there will be other observers for whom it travels backwards in time. But several eminent physicists and mathematicians have quite seriously suggested this apparently paradoxical possibility, mostly but not entirely for subatomic phenomena. There is, for example, the Stückelberg-Feynman idea that a positron can be regarded as an electron moving backwards in time. In Gödel's modification of relativity theory, a speed of 72 per cent. of the speed of light is enough to produce backward time travel. The apparent paradoxes of backward time can be resolved in terms of the branching-universe theory, but I shall not go into details here.

### *Precognition and Telepathy*

The evidence for precognition, such as it is, is evidence that signals can travel backwards in time. Perhaps the best evidence is not yet scientific, because it depends on highly critical emotional situations which can hardly be repeated in a controlled manner; but there is a rather carefully controlled card-guessing experiment by S. G. Soal in which a subject appeared to show precognitive telepathic powers. There is no doubt of the statistical significance of these results if conscious or unconscious cheating did not occur, and it seems to me to be one of the best pieces of evidence for telepathy as well as for precognition.

The main evidence against telepathy is that new scientific evidence for it is so slow in coming in. I feel at present that the existence of telepathy is 2 : 1 against, but that if it is possible, then Soal's results are very probably valid, so that precognition is then also possible.

One thing is fairly certain. If telepathy is possible, the Chief Entities would have perfected it by now. It might be impossible for telepathic communication to take place between beings of entirely different structures or backgrounds, but perhaps some people, such as Swedenborg, have received messages from the Chief Entities. It has been suggested that telepathy is a natural human sense but that it is repressed by the Freudian censor. A possible explanation for this repression would be that, on the rare occasions that our censor is asleep, we receive messages from the Chief Entities and we find them frightening. Certainly most people would be frightened by the kind of dreams that Swedenborg had. It is interesting to note that a primitive form of the nebular hypothesis was suggested by Swedenborg, although he was scooped by Descartes.

Those who believe in telepathy believe, for the most part, that the effects are independent of distance. The experimental evidence refers only to terrestrial distances. A possible explanation is that the telepathic signals travel right round the spherical universe and are focused back in the neighbourhood of the earth, as in a whispering gallery. Beings with much more developed telepathic powers might be able to communicate over distances of many light years, and this would greatly speed up interstellar communications. These beings might even live as a single consciousness. Each galaxy of appropriate age would have achieved this condition, and one would expect all these consciousnesses to be in telepathic communication. If telepathy is possible at all, I would guess that all the best life in the universe is now living in a state of integrated consciousness almost as old as the universe. The consciousness of a man is apparently a consequence of close communication between many entities: we tend to forget that a neuron is an animal that lives in the head.

A reasonable name for an integrated, almost immortal, consciousness permeating the universe is "quasi-God" or "Godd" for short. A person who does not believe in Godd is a quasi-atheist or an atheist; personally, I am a quasi-agnostic, since I am not convinced that precognitive telepathy is possible. Godd exists if, and only if, signals can travel faster than light. Some idea of Godd's size can be gleaned from the accompanying Five-Billion Times Table.

In comparison with human beings, Godd is of course very powerful indeed, but if these speculations are correct, and you accept my interpretation, he is not omnipotent. In this respect, this idea of Godd resembles H. G. Wells' concept of God in his book, *God the Invisible King*. As Wells pointed out, if God is all powerful there is nothing we can do for him, but serving him does have some point if his powers are

limited. And the theological problem of pain is soluble with this assumption.

It might be misleading to say that Godd's powers are limited, since they must be almost unimaginably great. I think he would, for example, have been able to string together the forty-six chromosomes of Christ, and this would account for the Virgin Birth. Presumably mystics are people who can get into telepathic communication with Godd, and this, according to these speculations, would come to the same thing as becoming a part of him. The idea has something in common with Teilhard de Chardin's concept of the "Omega Point", although it was developed independently.

#### A FIVE-BILLION TIMES TABLE

If  $N$  is about  $2^{32}$  or about five billion, then, give or take a factor of ten:

there are  $N$  bases in a human DNA set, there being one such set in most of the cells in the body;

there are  $N$  neurons in the human brain;

there are  $N$  humans on earth;

there are perhaps  $N$  inhabited planets in our galaxy;

there are  $N$  galaxies in the observable universe.

(Eddington estimated the number of particles in the universe as  $204 \times 2^{256}$ .)

Mystics, then, are having a foretaste of the life to come. I hope that one day the whole human race will be invited to join this cosmic club. It is not a very exclusive club, as it already has at least a quadrillion members. And I believe it is probable that our first step towards membership will be the invention of the ultraintelligent machine.

The following speculation will serve as an example of the sort of thing that Godd could possibly do. Note first that a man on earth inside a simulated robot could control electromagnetically a real robot on the moon, although the 2.6 seconds of transmission delay would make the robot's actions ungainly. By analogy, perhaps our bodies are remotely controlled by "ourselves" telepathically from some point far away in the galaxy, at a place which I shall call "quasi-Heaven" or "Heavenn". In Heavenn, perhaps as a punishment, we are hypnotized so as to be unaware of previous experiences there, and we are then given telepathic control over our earthly bodies, not necessarily human. When these

bodies die we awake from our trance and write a thesis, as a contribution to the great DNA experiment. Only occasionally does someone derive heavenly sensations while still in the trance, and he is then said to have a mystical experience.\*

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# The Unholy Family

*Charles Beatty*

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After theologians divorced magic and religion, perhaps for the first time in history, like a sea-worn pebble, smooth and featureless, the word God came to mean, in Europe, little more than the moral sanction of society, man-made and therefore mortal:

“With the death of God there is no longer an absolute, be it goodness, truth or love; what remains is a vision of life in all its nakedness, urgency and power, life at its most fundamental, stripped of all the categories and moral evaluations that man has laid upon it”.

So wrote Ray Furness in *T. to T.* October 1967. *verb sap.*

This nightmare, “the most fearful event in all history”, now threatens to become reality. It has happened not so much because of materialism as through anti-rational forces, long repressed, which are at last free to thrust up from the depths to fill the vacuum created by religion from which the spirit is departed. One of these forces is represented by the revival of witchcraft in the classical, unchanging sense unequivocally described by Sir James Frazer in *The Golden Bough*:

“This universal faith, this truly Catholic creed . . . If the test of truth lay in a show of hands or a counting of heads, the system of magic might appeal, with far more reason than the Catholic Church, to the proud motto, “Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus”, as the sure and certain credentials of its own infallibility”.

Sir James realised, as did hardly anyone else except perhaps the psychologist C. J. Jung, that the revival of witchcraft is always a possibility, since it continues to exist, everywhere and always, at the back of the mind, beyond the firmament which separates personality from the integral identity. Compare Pennethorne Hughes (*Witchcraft 1952*): “It is sometimes asked whether witchcraft will revive”: Dean Inge asked in an article in the *Fortnightly* in May 1949: “as we know witchcraft, the answer is that it will not”.

Yet in 1948 *The Order of the Hidden Masters* was organizing occultists of the Left Hand Path. The Order (O.H.M.) reappeared about 1955, and in 1966 Sybil Leake told me there was only one Master left, being over ninety. That was not quite the end of them, however, for a voice purporting to be from one of them startled an investigating reporter from the *News of the World* through the mouth of a Manchester medium.

Mrs. Leake, who takes the credit for the witchcraft revival in Hampshire, also told me she knew of eight or nine practising covens in the county, but another witch put it at "a coven of covens" including the Isle of Wight. They are organised on a national basis, Scottish practitioners dissenting. All big cities have their complement, as do many towns, and even caravan sites. There is supposed to be at least one coven in each university, and I know of a College which initiated students into the cult of Bast, the cat-headed Sekmet whose very name I thought was long forgotten save by Egyptologists.

Aradia! My Aradia!  
Thou who art daughter unto him  
who of old was most evil of all spirits,  
who by his sister did thy sire become!

The mother of Aradia is Diana the Huntress in her aspect of the Dark Destroyer (cf. "the destroying mother" concept of Jung) *alias* Astarte, Astaroth, Tiamat *et al.* Her father is The Horned God, the Dark Lord Descendant, whose theriomorphic form is commonly the goat, though for the purpose of seducing his sister, Lucifer became a cat. Recently I met a goatee-bearded, sane individual, seriously declared to be the direct descendent of the Horned God of Western Europe.

Father, Mother and Daughter constitute The Unholy Family, Godhead of the Shadow, though The Craft as their worship is known in England today, understandably prefers a less revealing title: The Old Religion (or Faith). And certainly, through painted caves and megalithic symbols, the rôle of The Dual Mother can be traced back to prehistory; but our witches tend to forget the Bright Face of her Moon, without which the cult is necessarily unbalanced, left-handed, black. For it there is one thing we can be sure of concerning this most widespread and most ancient of European religions it is that her principle is continuity of existence. Though Earth Mother devours all her children, yet are they reborn by Heaven Mother, over and over again. Which is perhaps the essence of all religion worthy of attention: continuity of identity and experience over very long periods of time.

**Hear O Israel, Adonai is One!  
There is no Allah but Allah!**

**Great religions are those which begin and end with the protestation of the Unity, that code-word for continuity, and much else besides. Many of them distinguish the poles of energy derived from it, so making the triad of evolution: mind, energy, and form, three in process of becoming one – the same One from which they derive.**

**Many religions recognize the integrating process in people. Mystics of all persuasions seek the same thing: union by any name or none. Most cultures recognize individuals who achieved such union, the twice-born incarnations of the One, which for most practical purposes are in the West included in the concept of Christus Rex, the Bright Lord Ascendant. And, just as the witches have forgotten Him, so do theologians forget the Dark Lord, His Brother within the Unity, as both negative and positive electricity are within the current that unites them and makes light.**

**As a knife has a different duty in the hand of surgeon or assassin, so has life's sovereign power capacity for both creation and destruction, either of which can be good or bad according to circumstances. Growth is not always good (e.g. cancer). Decay is not always bad (e.g. digestion). Health is a meticulous balance of anabolism and katabolism. Matter is a meticulous balance of energy in transformation – “up” and “down” if you like, though not in any three-dimensional sense. This is the dimension of becoming. This is Nature on the grand scale and in every least thing also. By divorcing Nature from God the Church arrogantly dismissed the accumulated wisdom of millenia. By insisting on an exclusive salvation she rejected both the spirit universal and its incarnation through human love. In rejecting sex and equating it with sin the Church broke with the ancient religions, and made inevitable the inversion of her own profession.**

**Although materialism is generally regarded as the world-view of our time, the fact is that it is old hat; which almost anyone can see except theologians still working in the terracentric universe. The witches know it well. Perhaps they will soon be strong enough to pay off some old scores, even to break an Establishment which, before The Age of Reason, claimed to have routed the last remnant of The Old Religion. And did not a Lambeth Conference solemnly abolish the Devil? That would be about the time when, following repeal of the Witchcraft Act, The Craft came into the open and began to organize. It is a stupefying glimpse of the obvious that there is no such thing as Satanic love, but maybe he has a sense of humour.**



# Climbing in Wales

*Julia Darling*

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From a low-lying swamp,  
Where a blurred eye enveloped the trees  
In a mist of blindness  
And the mind's eye imprisoned them  
In a cage of calculability,  
I was called to the Holy Mountain.

From sinking in the mire  
I shook my step free of clay's necessity  
Treading in the print of ancient feet  
I entered a garden:  
'Stay awhile' sang the windless firs.  
Negligent, complacent, the reclining intellect  
Once hot-foot in condemnation  
Took to the worship of its grove.  
August the yew tree and beech  
The linnets cloyed in the laurel  
The goldcrest murmuring in the pine  
'Stray no further' to those in illusion's sleep  
Who had forgotten the call of the wild.

'O open the gate from the grove!  
Open the garden gate!  
Look it is opening!  
Strike the heath, the moorland, the upward path'.  
I arise as bid, reluctant at first  
Absorbed in the contemplation of flight, escape  
Not the pursuit of truth.

Once in the snow  
Outside the gate  
Over the stone wall  
All is different.  
Exalted in expectation  
The lonely pipit and ptarmigan stir:  
From the farm in the vale

The cocks begin to crow  
For this is the first dawn of growth  
The revelation of wealth  
The end of slavery.

I travel alone up the holy mountain  
Hopeful, in spite of the steep climb  
Spurred on by the bird's wing  
And light feet of hind.

I travel alone up the holy mountain  
Pass a glacial fountain  
And a larch hoar-frosted  
Whose birds are frozen  
Stiff as stalagmites  
Whose limbs and spurs are broken  
Cracked, split by the cold.

The cairn beckons before me —  
Is this the last incline?  
My feet have no grip on the ice  
Slide backwards in attempting ascent.

The mountain soars before me  
Rigid in its dome  
The bell unrung resounds with silence:  
Will I ever reach the zone  
Beyond snow in awesome stillness  
Where the stone on the peak  
Is the first pillar to heaven?

Here is our source of contact with the firmament  
An azure disc, as a shaft of blue light  
Issues through a clearing in the halo of cloud  
Encircling the summit  
We atone with the universe.  
In the bright streams descending  
We feel the current of the ancestral sea  
We know the unlocking of towers  
The warming of monuments, the movement of stones  
The linking of chains  
The joy of becoming.

The mountain roars  
Its dome is quaking  
Its rigid clasp on the bell is breaking  
The wandering air has the clapper shaken  
The world rings with the peal  
'This is Rebirth  
Beborn!  
Reborn! Return to earth  
And Blessed be Thy people'.

Soon I am running, leaping, flying  
The snow laps softly about my following feet  
I see it melt while the cold hills are thawing  
The ice is quivering, cracking on the moorland lake.  
Is that an oriole, like streak-lightning, there?  
I glide with the lark down the mountain slope.

Look how the fountain springs  
From the adamantine state  
Into rills of living water  
Teeming with fauna and brilliant form:  
Listen to the breeze unfolding  
The hidden grace in the larch  
Whose cones are the gifts from a heavenly source.

From woodland ride I hear the cry  
Of the first lamb  
There are sheep in the farm's fold  
Hark children cry on the hillside!  
They sledge in the thawing snow.  
Why, there are so many guides to spring in the air!  
I bound through the garden  
Scattering a flock of sedentary wood pigeons  
And startle the plump pheasant.

Yet where are the fen and mire?  
They have vanished being vanquished.  
This I had never dreamt to behold  
The land drained, the fallow ploughed  
And the sorrow of the dank clay-clod  
A green sward meadow  
With shoots springing out of the ground  
In the clear shining, after rain.

**O Welcome to a fresh domain  
Where curlew and mallard  
May lift unfettered from furrow or pond  
O Welcome to the vernal earth again!**

## Comment

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### *Religion and Secular Civilization*

Several quarters ago, I said in a letter you published, that I hoped *Theoria to Theory* would not leave the question of ecclesiology too far out of its purview. Now that this has been a main topic in two issues of the journal, I would like to offer a comment or two upon the discussion so far as it has gone: I found the beginning of it a bit disquieting.

Perhaps I took the first editorial introduction to the subject too seriously. I will suppose, even if it strains my benevolence somewhat, that the writer meant only to clear the ground for debate; although the attempt to do this by levelling all human associations down to the same plane and call them "religious" is very odd.

The most illuminating contribution, not written for this symposium but happily included in it, is the late Sister Emily's remark that the chief "behavioural sign" of a religious community is "the capacity to take rational decisions". This is a thing that associations for secular aims are able to do only much more rarely and then nearly always in regard to limited if not merely technical questions. Ordinary associations and institutions for economic, political and cultural work are the less able to come to rational conclusions the more comprehensive are their aims and responsibilities – as we see, for instance, in the case of recently-established institutions intended to perform functions of world-wide scope.

The incapacity of any ordinary human collectivity to conduct its affairs rationally used to be common knowledge, being an integral part of the immemorial tradition about religion and the social order which, in various but analogous terms, has come down to most if not to all peoples. Admittedly, my own belief in the existence and underlying unity of that tradition is the position from which I write; but then, it is the only position which enables me to make sense and coherence of such information (philosophical, anthropological and sociological) as I have accumulated since the beginning of the century. Allowing for possible errors, apparent exaggerations etc., in my own presentation of it, this traditional view is still pretty widely held to be sound and was the standard view until the modern mind became allergic to it – and this for reasons which have received some attention in your pages in other applications, and will doubtless continue to do so.

In the view of this "universal" tradition, all really viable societies

grow, so to speak, from seed. The seed of each one is an individual in such a pure condition that he or she can be (to pursue the metaphor) fertilized by the superhuman reality (with a capital R) and become a "new" specimen of humanity which has the qualities of the original "primordial" humanity when it was first endowed with them. The state of being thus "revealed" is communicable to an indefinite degree; thus, those whose humanity is renewed by contact with and acceptance of it, grow into a "seedling" of society, which grows by generation and accretion into a "religion". The religion, by its presence in the surrounding human collectivity in which it arises, enables the latter to attain a more and more highly structured but voluntary form of co-operative order. Whatever may be the ruling powers in the collectivity, it cannot govern without the co-operation of religion. There is then a further development into a civilization, which after exhausting all its given possibilities of attainment, decays and passes away; its remains left as a kind of manure to be used in the growth of a new social organism from another seed of revelation. This biological metaphor is of course only partially apt. The new seed is not a legacy from the blossom of the civilization, it comes, as always, from "beyond the stars" – from something transcendent to time and space.

This is my very crude attempt to offer a "paradigm" of the process. But it is, I think, a way of conceiving the "social ontogenesis" that we find, essentially similar in spite of the immense differences, in Plato and in the Indian sociological tradition; and is it not evident in Toynbee's history of civilizations? – although the first is purely philosophic, the second entirely religious and the last purely historical. It is in the correspondences between them that we can discern what I have called the immemorial tradition.

But to return to Churches: religion acts upon the collectivity like a catalyst; its presence makes it possible for the different types, interests and ambitions of individuals to combine into an intelligible social order. The institutions whereby other religions do this – its centres for indoctrination, sacraments and ritual – bear only a veiled resemblance to the churches of Christianity, except in the other two great monotheistic religions. It was the Jews of the Babylonian exile who invented the synagogue, giving the devotional center a "congregational" form for the first time in history: the Christian church developed out of this and (I invite correction if I am mistaken) so did the Islamic mosque. Presumably, religious communities had to take on this higher form of communication before civilization could develop to its maximum power and elaboration with tentacles ramifying all over the planet.

This must be near the culmination of our civilization – the phase of fullest efflorescence, when a civilization loses its religion. Which means that it is losing its will to live. However, on this bio-religious view, the great cycles of civilization, derived from the highest revelations, are followed by, and include “epicycles” starting from inspirations of lesser importance, but not therefore less authentic. These may revivify certain energies in a civilization and thereby prolong its life.

There is a current tendency to think that the ability to include people of fundamentally diverse religious and other traditions is the mark of a “higher” society, but this is an error. The inclusiveness in question, is a characteristic of imperial civilizations at a late stage of their existence. It comes about through the influx of what Toynbee calls the “external proletariat”; also through relaxation of the civilization’s own standards and its hospitality to alien cultures. But, developing in function with this, are the means to keep the citizens under police control. This phase cannot therefore be regarded as a higher state of society, but it does show a civilization in full maturity, with increasingly democratic government, efforts to improve the condition of the poor and the growth to its maximum of direct employment by the political State. It is an epoch of a brilliance which, in our own case, is raised to a higher power by all the products of an age of science. Plato, who takes this “democratic” stage of civilization to be also the penultimate stage, says it is the one in which most men and women, if they had the choice, would choose to live. It is so permissive, so rich in varieties of life, of character, occupation and opportunity, so replete with booty from earlier times and foreign lands, that its citizens enjoy great compensations for the cultural sterility that is often alleged against it. Decadence is frightful, but can be enjoyable while it lasts.

In drawing the distinction between society and civilization, which are different phases of growth, the one passing gradually into the other, I can only suggest that the transition takes place at the time when (owing to increasing urban concentration and many other factors) the majority of the people no longer feels that the authority of the Church is super-ordinate to the authority of the State. The supra-human authority, which then lacks any *instituted* representative here below, does not however pass to the State. Attempts to invest the monarchy or aristocracy with this function are defeated. But aspirations which were previously absorbed in the pursuit of religious ideals (the character-ideals of the saint and the chivalrous hero, for instance) are now focussed upon the State, which apparently has the power to make everything better and ought to exercise it. When this expectation too is

disappointed, we enter upon the age of revolutions; of efforts (which largely succeed) to break up the whole system of society and remould it nearer to the heart's desire. In the latter aim, these efforts are unsuccessful, being at the great disadvantage that their design for society is a purely human invention, subject to human contradiction, and therefore has to be imposed by force. It is noteworthy that revolutions which succeed to power take pains to invent and enforce a substitute for religion – ersatz “faiths” which are never long believed in. But revolutions, like wars, can accelerate or facilitate pre-existing movements of civilization – such as bureaucratic control or military and economic mechanization – by destroying defences against them.

Meanwhile for such genuine social cohesion as they have, civilizations still depend, to an unknown extent, upon remains of the authentic religious tradition, which cannot be totally extirpated. Religion is operative in the passive as well as the active mode, and is able to survive a very great deal of repression. It always is and must be in some opposition to the secular government of society, even where the two co-exist in full theoretical recognition of each other's rights.

Any idea that the conflict or tension between religion and the political power is reducible to a “dichotomy” which could be transcended seems to me as vacuous as to suppose that we could think rationally without “pairs of opposites”. The fundamental oppositions are reconciled only in Divinity. One may say that, for instance, the past and the future are united and transcended in the present, but then the present instant is at least as much out of Time as in it. Indeed, according to the highest religious metaphysics, this is the intersection of time by eternity, and experience of it is the source of Divine revelation and a glimpse of omniscience; for eternity is an attribute of God. A revelation of God in an individual mind – this is the origin of the seed which grows into a discipleship, into an institution, and thereby inevitably into an organ of the society, whose members it assembles for a different purpose – namely, to keep them orientated in heart and mind, towards the revelation of truth that has been given to them.

Civilizations are temporary growths, parasitic upon the “biosphere” of the Earth; they are also means, and the most elaborate means, to the redemption of the human collectivity from its condition of evil, misery and ignorance. Religions and the churches are organs of this ameliorative process. One of the malefic tendencies in the climate of opinion during a decadent period, owing to the interesting distractions it offers, is a will to disbelieve that the human will is in need of redemption. We want to reject the idea that man, when he first attained or received the power of reflective thought, “opted for” the negative



rather than the positive mode of using it – “the fall”, original sin etc. – although this idea is fundamental to the great tradition, both of the world-religious and of nearly if not all the lesser ones. Perhaps this is one of the problems we need to include in the present discussion.

On the other hand, there is a passionate will to save man from all his evils by civilizing him more and more. And in some quarters, a desire to justify this by assuming that the civilizing process is continuous with that of biological evolution. This is a major reason for the enthusiastic response to the literary legacy of Teilhard de Chardin – a great personality and a fascinating writer. He thought it was his pastoral duty as a priest to “jolly us along” the path of civilization to which we are committed. If we make too much a virtue of civilization however, we may weaken its only real redemptive function, which is the witness it can bear to the supra-temporal nature of its origin: we may come near to idolizing Time as the Marxists idolize “history”.

The process of the evolution of religion and civilization is conditioned by something unique, and by much that is factitious, in the actual nature of man. It is quite distinct from the process of biological evolution with which it is involved. It is, however, equally beyond human control and, on any long view, beyond our prevision. It does not go by continuous creation but by death and resurrection. Its goal is a consummation, not in time past nor in a future millions of years distant, but in the highest possible realization of the present.

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### *De-transcendentalising*

The point of view I would like to see represented in *Theoria to Theory* is the radical one which recognizes that the old theological vocabulary has largely ceased to work as a vehicle for living communication, but which also maintains that the essential gist of the christian insight is an invariant of human experience. It ought to be possible to express this “gist” in modern biological/psychological/cybernetic language owing nothing to the transcendentalist obscurities of the past. To equate God with “depth” or “the root of our being” is an attempt to do this. Many baulk at it, feeling that what was uniquely important and mysterious has been cut down to an unimpressive size. But one may query whether even these attempts at drastic translation have gone far enough. “Depth” is extremely vague and the “root of our being” sounds frankly

medieval. So we do not seem to make much progress. How could a transcendentalist doctrine be expressed in non-transcendentalist prose? Is not this an impossible task, like trying to express  $\sqrt{2}$  as a fraction?

The question which seems to me to suggest that the problem is not intrinsically insoluble is this: If the notion of God as an entity is as indefensible as the notion of the actual infinite\* (a set of sets neo-platonically existing in the Frege-Cantor sense) what did christians of the past really believe when they thought they believed in this non-entity, and why did their belief work in such an extraordinarily fine way? What, in other words, did they really conditionally expect in their experience? Many christians in the past believed that their faith was verified in their experience: in other words what they expected to happen under certain conditions happened. What is certain is that the transcendentalist promises of the christian message were never fulfilled in experience: they could not be, because the states of affairs they postulated were, by definition, beyond experience. Now what mathematicians really believed when they thought they believed in the actual infinite was that, for any number  $n$  suggested beforehand, one could always find (i.e. construct) a larger one. So what was originally believed to be an ontological issue appeared, under logical clarification, to be concerned with the possibilities of constructing numerals.

It is not absurd to think that we might make progress on these lines with analyses of theological beliefs. And one ought not to bemoan the *idea* of translating ontological statements into "recipes for constructing solutions", for mathematicians handle the concept of infinity much better now that they have seen exactly what it implies, and have freed themselves from its bewitching and misleading undertones. We have abandoned the notion that "One", "Minus", "e", "Infinity" etc. are names: perhaps we would see the human predicament more clearly if we recognised that "God", too, is not a name. As a suggestion about the lines on which the analysis might proceed the following could be taken: "For any solution of a human problem given beforehand there is a more imaginative and more humane solution". It seems to me that this statement is true and important, and that it encompasses at least a part of what believers in the past really expected (in experience) when they "believed in God". Everything civilized and admirable in our man-made environment began, after all, as an idea or image in someone's imagination. If the notion of "God" has had a beneficial

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\* Some mathematicians say that they believe in the "actual infinite" but they are at a loss to say exactly what they mean by this. This is a very large question in itself and there is not room to go into it here.

influence on human history it is surely as a spur to (not a magic formula for) finding (i.e. imagining) and securing better solutions to human problems. Such a statement may begin to sharpen the distinction, at present somewhat blurred, between what humanists believe and what christians believe. Humanists urge that there are solutions to many human problems; but they do not place their emphasis on the fact that human solutions are continually being superseded and that new ones are continually needed. In other words there is an athleticism about christianity which is missing from the humanist doctrine. Humanists tend to say that we need the right solutions, i.e. we need rather advanced or sophisticated ones. This view suits the armchair intellectual but it is not so well suited to the life of backward and unintellectual peoples. In fact it is not realistic if we open our eyes to what the world is actually like.

To say that better solutions to human problems are always possible is to say that there is, as it were, *room* for better solutions, not that anyone in particular will find them. To believe that there is an infinite amount of room in this dimension is I think pretty near to the "gist" of the christian insight. (But to put it like that is to slip back a little towards reified language.) The next step, and all the work, lies in saying *why* there should be an infinite amount of room in this dimension. To give the explanation we need a theory of man which contains, as it were "built-in", the operational gist of the christian insight. And this perhaps will be the theory to which theoria points.

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### *Food Gathering*

The thing which struck me most in the last number of *T. to T.* was the postscript to Euell Gibbon's article on *Survival à la Carte*. I was immediately sympathetic to his notion that a *religious* investigation of man's *place* must include his relationship to the *rest* of nature, not only animal but *vegetable*. The hyacinth I have at the moment proclaims its *identity* to me, which is certainly not merely a replacement of the one that died, which I got it to replace. How much more is our consciousness of the identities of more lasting and companionable things, such as favourite trees. What interested me also was the fact that when the author found a plant beautiful or endearing, he ATE it, indeed it was often attractive *because* it was good to eat: and that he

saw this as a religious process akin to the holy meal. This has a comic side, but only repeats a theme I've met before, of *assimilation* of a loved or beautiful thing by eating. Odd but it also highlights what is obvious and reprehensible in the animal world, that it is *built in* to the life of nature that animals **MUST** eat each other, and that vegetarianism only solves *part* of one's objection to this process; it does away with the act of cruelty in so far as that is causing pain to something *conscious of its own identity*, and therefore (since this seems to go with it) anxious to *retain* that identity (and to continue to live); though I think we have, but undeveloped, the possibility of a contrary tendency, the willingness to submit personal identity to loss in another, and that if this were developed it could annihilate this notion of cruelty/pain, since the pain is not simply a physiological fact, but one's attitude to the fact, and varies with individuals, to the point of being worse in anticipation for some than it is in process for others.

Anyway what I want to get at is that to subject the individuality of a separate thing to one's *own* identity, and to annihilate its identity for one's own survival, is fundamentally the same process, whether it is killing and eating an animal or a hyacinth or a shellfish on the coast of Maine; only *subsidiary* factors enter, when there is animal consciousness of and desire to preserve identity: but since this process of obliterating one identity in order to sustain another is *built in* to nature, whether with or without "cruelty", our only way of seeing any purposive spirit in nature as benevolent, is to decide that we *have got our experience of suffering wrong*, and that this loss of personal identity in conscious beings, which I see as being the essence of suffering, is a *misexperience*, being insufficiently balanced by our *willingness* to lose personal identity in death, whether at the hands of another animal (human or non-human), or whether in natural catastrophe, such as earthquake or starvation. Since our evolutionary survival has occurred because of our *assertion* of personal identity over those identities that can be the passive components in this eternal flux of the assimilation of one identity in another, it absolutely follows that we must be animals with an identity-assertion dominant in us – yet we know we also have the potentiality of the contrary. We cannot see the contrary dominant in any animal, because that animal would have ceased to exist; but as a rational animal capable of deductions with foresight and hindsight, we *are* capable of controlling and even reversing the will to survive, in a way that other spontaneous animals are *not*. Presumably the great example of a human ability to make the "willingness-to-submit-personal-identity" dominant over the "instinct-to-survive-as-identity" is Christ, and that was only achieved by

a struggle, and by a highly conscious view of his position; this alternative, of the personal identity submitting to or devouring another, is given the *eating* image again, and consciously, by Christ, in the image of himself as the bread to be broken and eaten. If this potentiality to accept breaking in all of us could be summonable at will, we should cease to suffer anything but physical pain and as I understand it, pain may be subjective and dependent on the *fear* of loss of identity in death, or loss of control of the self. But even in Christ it was a potentiality made active and dominant only with difficulty.

Over Christmas I had a card of a van Gogh tree on my television set, and as a religious truth it contrasted favourably with the various mimes and verbal formulations of the churches, who were on the TV programmes: what I felt as the religious truth of the van Gogh tree is the same as I felt with the hyacinth, the proclamation of its particular identity for its own sake, and not as an assertion over another thing – and this celebration of its identity becomes a celebration of the beauty and goodness of God. Some people of course – John Cowper Powys, for example – would be as unwilling to harm a living plant as a living animal – and this because you don't want to destroy *any* individual identity because of its *value* as an identity, not because you shrink from giving pain. I think this is proper; but one *should* be willing to *give up* one's identity, without feeling that God or nature is doing one a wrong.

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### *Language and Silence*

Mr. Hare's critique of Marshall MacLuhan's three books, in your April issue of last year, would have been more enlightening, if he had taken into account George Steiner's collection of essays, *Language and Silence* (Faber & Faber, 1967). The book includes a study of MacLuhan, written in 1963, and the same ideas are examined, criticised and developed in some of the other essays. It is a work of Literary Criticism rather than of Philosophy or Sociology, and the middle of the book deals with the Jewish question, the latter part with Marxism. But throughout, the author is concerned about the relation between the written and the spoken word, and modes of communication other than Language.

Steiner does not follow MacLuhan into the realms of automation and electronic computing, but develops and to some extent

systematises his insights in the matter of Language. There is this difference between them, that whereas MacLuhan is all agog at the prospect of the new age that will follow the "Gutenberg Galaxy". Steiner, as is natural in a teacher of Language, is deeply concerned with the problems that would be raised by a decline in literacy.

It was inevitable that the civilization which sprang from Greek culture and Hebrew religion, should have attached supreme importance to the Word: but

"We should not assume that a verbal matrix is the only one in which the articulations and conduct of the mind are conceivable. There are modes of intellectual and sensuous reality founded not on language but on other communicative energies rooted in silence". Steiner goes on to give examples from Buddhism, Taoism, the Trappists and S. John of the Cross. But in general

"Literature, philosophy, theology, law and the arts of history, are endeavours to enclose within the bounds of rational discourse the sum of human experience, its recorded past, its present condition and future expectations".

When Language reaches its limits, it passes on into Light, or Music, or Silence. This I regard as the core of Steiner's insight. "It is because we can go no further, because speech so marvellously fails us, that we experience the certitude of divine meaning, surpassing and enfolding ours. What lies beyond man's word is eloquent of God. That is the joyously defeated recognition expressed in the poems of S. John of the Cross and of the mystic tradition". Language passing into Light is illustrated from Dante: as he nears the Rose of Fire, he becomes inarticulate. Of several examples of Music one is the Love Duet in the second act of Tristan. It is in the third of these transmutations that Steiner's concerns seem to coincide with the objects of *Theoria to Theory*: the suspension of thought in encounter with Eternal Love.

There has always been in the English tradition a conviction that it is poetry, imagination, and not logic, intellect, that must deal with the highest truths. This would be easy to accept, but Steiner goes further than this. Before we get to the highest levels, we are, in his opinion, impoverished as well as enriched by our literacy. If it is true that "50 per cent of modern colloquial speech in England and America comprizes only 34 basic words"\* it is difficult to believe that those whose speech remains within this limit are richer on the balance than

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\* Quoted by Steiner from G. H. MacKnight, *English Words and their Background*, 1923.

those whose vocabulary is more copious: but I am encouraged to hope that this impoverishment is a by-product of a process that is going to enrich mankind by supplementing our modes of apprehension with others which we have lost.

It is difficult for Christians who have had a classical upbringing to accept claims to transcend Reason, because what aspires to rise above Reason may so easily sink below it. Moreover, "In the beginning was the Word", suggests that the Reality to which we aspire beyond our created Languages has itself something akin to Reason. We have to reconcile this with the Silence in which Language finds its fulfilment.

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## Review

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*The Way of The Sufi* by Idries Shah. Jonathan Cape, 36s.

Idries Shah counts among his ancestors many of the great Sufi masters of Central Asia, notably Afghanistan. Today he is the most authoritative and most readable interpreter of Sufism to the West. In the first part of the present book, as in *The Sufis*, he writes along conventional scholarly lines, criticizing and showing up Western students, who, working from the outside and with blinkered methods of investigation, have tended to label Sufism limitatively as a "Mohammedan mystical cult" or some other inept and inert term. But the greater part of *The Way of the Sufi* is a selection of stories, poems, anecdotes and other spiritual teaching materials used by the dervish masters, introducing the reader to the forms of an activity consistent with but independent of cultural or orthodox religious context, whose aim is a higher working of the mind, "leading to special perceptions whose apparatus is latent in the ordinary man". The Sufi is in the world but not of it, he is timeless and placeless; he modifies the form of the teaching according to the audience. In presenting Sufi initiatory stories to the contemporary public Idries Shah has even used the strip cartoon form (drawn by Richard Williams), in his two collections of Mulla Nasrudin stories. The virtue of Nasrudin stories is that they will endure merely as entertaining jokes. But they are also spiritual nutrition for followers of a mystical way, and as jokes they are able subtly to strike in the rear the empty schemes of mechanical intellection and prejudices of conditioning, and awaken insights. To the "educated" intellectual the Sufi valuation of purely discursive thinking as one of man's lower capacities may sound a bit much. Truth is relatively true, and the dominating prejudice of our small society is that the only truth demonstrable is that of a proposition arrived at by process of substantiated and logic-based disputation. Mentioning the name of Gurdjieff in the house of a famous Oxford philosopher brought a cloud across the sun, and a declaration from the philosopher himself that the very idea of a spiritual master "frankly made him want to vomit". However those not completely asleep in limited patterns of thinking (accepted at this stage of evolution as normal) will be aware that Idries Shah's intention is not merely to inform or amuse, but to teach, or more accurately, to turn you on. "*Know Thyself*"; but nobody does. "I" is too fragmented and turned against itself to know itself. Put another way: Mulla Nasrudin's donkey bolted one day as he was riding



it, and he hung on grimly as it charged through the village. "Where are you going, Nasrudin?" shouted a bystander. Nasrudin yelled back: "I am looking for my donkey!" What can be learnt from reading *The Way of the Sufi* and meditating on its themes is comparable to the distance you can swim clutching a hundredweight of cabbage – the cabbage being in most cases the mental habits instilled by the conditioning processes of normal Western education, which impede further development. Idries Shah's book is, in a real sense, a key-book. "A hunter, walking through some woods, came upon a notice. He read the words:

### STONE-EATING IS FORBIDDEN

His curiosity was stimulated, and he followed a track which led past the sign until he came to a cave at the entrance to which a Sufi was sitting.

The Sufi said to him:

"The answer to your question is that you have never seen a notice prohibiting the eating of stones because there is no need for one. Not to eat stones may be called a common habit.

"Only when the human being is able similarly to avoid other habits, even more destructive than eating stones, will he be able to get beyond his present pitiful state".

Andrew Topsfield.

# Sentences

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From *The Way of the Sufi* by Idries Shah\*

## Learning

*None learned the art of archery from me  
Who did not make me, in the end, the target.*

## The Elephant-Keeper

*Make no friendship with an elephant-keeper  
If you have no room to entertain an elephant.*

## The Dervish in Hell

*One night a king dreamt that he saw a king in paradise and a dervish in hell.*

*The dreamer exclaimed: "What is the meaning of this? I should have thought that the positions would be reversed".*

*A voice answered: "The king is in heaven because he respected dervishes. The dervish is in hell because he compromised with kings".*

## Class

*The lower classes of society are those who fatten themselves in life in the name of religion.*

## Worship

*Mankind passes through three stages.*

*First he worships anything: man, woman, money, children, earth and stones.*

*Then, when he has progressed a little further, he worships God.*

*Finally, he does not say: "I worship God"; nor: "I do not worship God".*

*He has passed from the first two stages into the last.*

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\* See review. Acknowledgement for permission to quote these extracts is made to the author and the publishers, Jonathan Cape.

## Touching the Patchwork Robe

*Simply touch the patchwork robe of a Complete Man, and you incur the greatest benefit possible to an unregenerate individual. You owe such a man a very great debt. Similarly, attendance at the meeting of a pretended Sufi will drain from you a part of your very life.*

## Indigestion

*Take care you do not mistake indigestion for something else. You may visit a great man or read his book, and you may feel attraction or hostility. Often this is only indigestion in the student.*

## The Sick Man

*Throughout the long night a man wept  
At the bedside of a sick man.  
When day dawned the visitor was dead –  
And the patient was alive.*

## The Fool and the Donkey

*A foolish man was raving at a donkey. It took no notice. A wiser man who was watching said: "Idiot! The donkey will never learn your language – better that you should observe silence and instead master the tongue of the donkey".*

## NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

**Guy Wint** read Philosophy, Politics and Economics at Oriel College, Oxford. He travelled extensively in Asia, and was latterly a member of St. Anthony's College, Oxford, having been disequipped from his former life as a journalist through having a stroke. He died on 7th January 1969. Author of *India and Democracy*, *The British Asia*, and *The Third Killer*.

**Dick Joyce** is Reader in Psycho-pharmacology at The London Hospital Medical College.

**Ron Weldon**, after spending time as a family doctor and as a psychiatrist, is now involved in research with drugs and the dying at St. Christopher's Hospice, Sydenham, S.E.26.

**Donald Broadbent**, F.R.S. was educated at Winchester and at Pembroke College, Cambridge. He is now a Fellow of Pembroke and Director of the Applied Psychology Research Unit (Medical Research Council) in Cambridge. He has published on the effects of noise, on selective attention and memory; also *Perception and Communication* (Pergamon 1958) and *Behaviour* (Methuen's University Paperback Series).

**Dorothy Emmet** was formerly Professor of Philosophy in the University of Manchester. She is an Honorary Fellow of Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford and a Fellow of Lucy Cavendish College, Cambridge. Author of *Whitehead's Philosophy of Organism*, *The Nature of Metaphysical Thinking*, *Function, Purpose and Powers*, and *Rules, Roles and Relations*.

**John Barker** is reading English at Clare College, Cambridge. He wants to see, and in a small way is trying to make, the theatre of central social importance as it was for the Greeks, an essential emotional and communal experience rather than an entertainment or "thought provoking" evening out.

**Jorge Luis Borges** was born in 1899 in Buenos Aires and educated in Europe. He is known as the father of *Ultraismo*, the Spanish form of expressionism. Though he is now totally blind, he continues to write, and his later work is increasingly concerned with metaphysics.

**I. J. Good** is professor of Statistics at the Virginia Polytechnic Institute. Was the general editor of *The Scientist Speculates* (Heinemann and Basic Books, 1962), and the author of *Probability and the Weighing of Evidence* (1950) and *The Estimation of Probabilities* (1965), and over a hundred articles in mathematical, statistical and other periodicals.

**Charles Beatty** went to Sandhurst. Despite this he published in 1938 an attempted synthesis of fundamental concepts (Longfield Beatty: *The Garden of the Golden Flower*), which led, among other things, to marriage with Joan Grant whose *Winged Pharaoh* came out the same year. They differentiate personality from one permanent identity, which learns by experience over very long periods of time.

**Julia Darling**, poet and recluse, read moral philosophy and sociology in London, and is now studying English in Oxford.

**Andrew Topsfield** is reading Persian Studies at New College, Oxford.

**Zetta Baron**, who designed the cover, studied sculpture at Hammersmith, then for practical reasons tried selling shoes and running an antique stall in Portobello Road, and ended up as architectural assistant, model maker and draughtswoman with Ove Arup & Partners. She hopes to become a sculptor again.

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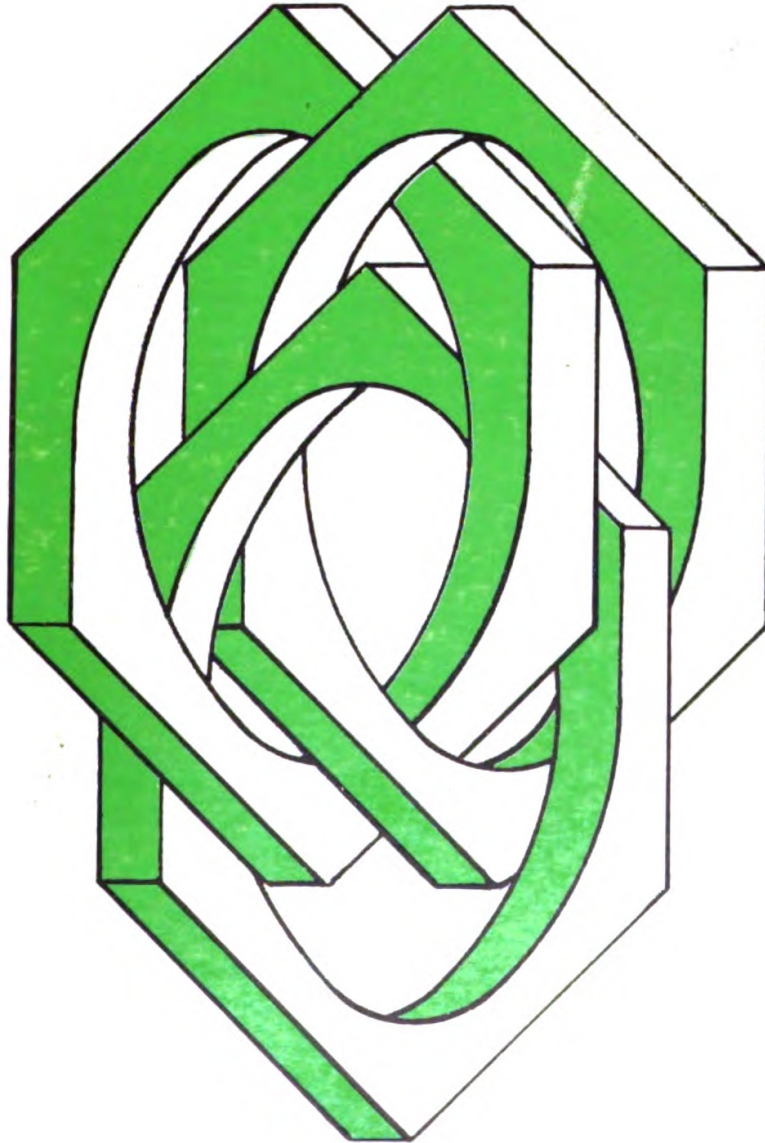
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# Theoria to Theory

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# THEORIA TO THEORY

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# Editorial

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In the last three editorials we have been trying to sketch out a general idea of a church. Our aim has been to try to describe a church (or, religious group) as a recurrently occurring phenomenon in the world; not to define it by narrowly ostensive definition as, "The Catholic Church is a church, of course The Orthodox Church is a church, the Anglican Church is a church, the Methodist Church is probably a church, and, well, we're not really sure whether the Society of Friends can really be counted as a church or not".

Such ostensive definition (we said) is evidently biased, bigotted, non-sociological, and non-scientific, and, in short, generally unsatisfactory. The trouble comes when one tries to replace it with anything else. Monasticism (see the discussion of Moorhouse's book in this number) is generally recognised as a permanent and recurrent human phenomenon. Thus one speaks of (e.g.) Christian monasticism, Buddhist monasticism, Sufi monasticism in a way which is doubtless inexact and over-colloquial, but which serves sufficiently well for a great deal of comparative discussion of monasticism to be profitably carried on. No such ease of communication exists when we try to speak of a church, because "church" is always thought of as a specifically Christian term. And yet, as soon as one becomes acquainted, in real life, with the habits and practices of other religions and sects, it becomes clear that something which one could, for want of a better name, call "the church phenomenon", arises among them and within them, whether by design or spontaneously, again and again.

So, in this last editorial of this series, let us try yet once more for a defensible conception of a church. A church, firstly, is not the same thing as a monastery (though a monastery can be described as a form of a church). Secondly, a church is not the same thing as a tribe, (though the twelve tribes of Israel, and later, the single tribe of Judah, clearly thought of themselves as constituting a religious elect, and therefore as pre-eminently a church).

No, a church in its most characteristic form is a kind of universalized tribe. A church is like a tribe in having common traditions, common rituals promoting ethical values, and mutual aid among its members; in saying that in its most characteristic form it is a kind of universalized tribe, we mean it is also trans-tribal, cutting across distinctions of kinship and culture. That is the reason why it has emerged comparatively recently as a human phenomenon. Travel and other



forms of communication between cultures, had to develop to a certain point before any multi-cultural religious group could possibly develop. Before that, as sociologists never tire of saying, *the church*, the religious group, was identifiable, in every case, with the tribe itself.

So, all right, a church is a universalized tribe, with practices and initiation rites whereby the members of it can identify one another. But there is more to it than that; for why should there ever develop such a phenomenon? Of what deep psycho-biological shoot or growth, or thrust, is the set of habits which constitute a church the outward, sociologically observable, covering or husk? Why are ordinary tribes, clans, societies, clubs not enough? Why do churches *qua* churches exist at all?

So we tried again. "A church is the institutional embodiment of a primal vision". Brave words: but, as critics and correspondents were quick to point out, we could not sufficiently identify the primal visions in any adequate one-to-one correspondence with the various churches. (To a certain extent, in the case of small groupings especially, one can do just that; thus of a remarkable man of this century who founded several such groups, it was said, "Any group founded by him was distinguished by a large generosity".) We pointed out, moreover, that there could arise spontaneous churches: and instanced that constituted by the Czech students, fearlessly jumping unarmed upon the Russian tanks, as being spontaneously "churchlike" behaviour arising from within a group of people animated by a primal vision which had not yet found its institutional embodiment.

This notion of a spontaneously-arising church brought forth fresh correspondence, and a fresh set of criticisms. We had defined the *idea* of a church too widely: when, (on such a definition) was any set of people *not* a church?

So we ended by settling provisionally for a church as a universalized, trans-tribal tribe, formed upon some religious basis, and possessing some identifiable structure and pattern of authority.

So we next began asking ourselves, "What, within such a church, characterizes authority?" and the overall answer we gave was, Religious authority – true religious authority – is secular authority in reverse; it is authority in which the senior behaves as the junior, the older as the younger, the initiator as the follower, and in which the attraction of the unexpectedness of this humility – *this*, rather than any actual authoritative action – constitutes the real authoritative power.

This general definition of religious authority immediately provoked criticism – as indeed it always has ever since a Jesus of Nazareth first formulated it. It was simultaneously said that such a conception of

authority could not possibly work; that it was what the best authority in industry or the Armed Services always had been like; and anyway, ecclesiastical authority was, in fact, just not like that. This set of criticisms reminded us of the old set of mathematical criticisms: "this theorem is nonsense: moreover, it is untrue: and I proved it myself in 1933". So, undeterred, we proceeded to try to separate from one another the *attractive* power of religious authority, (already, defined), the *persuasive* power of religious authority, and the *coercive* power of religious authority.

The persuasive power of religious authority depended (we said) on the religious teacher or preacher having a common set of concepts and of basic assumptions in terms of which he could communicate with those whom he was trying to persuade. This common set of concepts or assumptions no longer existed, we continued, (though, perhaps, the works of such a writer as Pierre Teilhard de Chardin show it might be possible to create them). In general, the persuasive power of religious authority in this century has totally broken down. The *coercive* power of religious authority on the other hand (that which gives such scandal) derives not from the power of the ruler, but from the power of the teacher; and is, therefore, justifiable in so far as, and only in so far as, there is something valuable and fundamental for which the religious guide, or teacher, or guru, or master, requires to have this coercive power if he is to be able to teach. The coerciveness of the power did not greatly trouble us: we call ourselves a permissive society, but in fact we are beset, as a society, by multiple coerciveness: medical coerciveness, examination coerciveness, terms of employment coerciveness, and so on. Religious bossiness, in this century and in our society, is only one among many other claims to boss; tainted currently, because it is predominantly exercised by men upon women, but, this fact apart, not illegitimate in itself. The 64,000 dollar question is not: "How coercive are religious gurus and novice-masters when they teach?", but, "what is it, if anything, that they claim to be teaching?" and only the answers to this question can throw essential, fundamental light on what is a church. For a church is a universalized tribe within which something is taught; or, at the very least, within which something is alleged to be taught. What is it? Is it something genuine, is it in this century merely an anachronism (and replaceable by such disciplines as psychiatry) or is it a psychologically attractive, but in fact, elaborate hoax?

As soon as we say "hoax" something deep within us rises in revolt. Another way of putting this is to say: what causes people in true religious authority so spontaneously to behave that they attract by the

unexpectedness of their humility? What caused the spontaneous fearlessness of (e.g.) the Czech students jumping on the tanks? What causes the adherents of true religious groups spontaneously and unexpectedly to show this "large generosity"? What causes, in fact, this fundamental change in the nature of spontaneity itself?

Notice, above, that the adjective "true" is three times repeated. It is as though we knew, intuitively and deep within ourselves, what the effects of true religious teaching ought to be, but that we don't yet know what it is that we know; and so we lack objectively valid criteria for distinguishing true religious teaching from false religious teaching. So the question now becomes: can we find these?

To start with, we must separate this true and deep (and universal) religious teaching from that particular teaching, different for each religion, which consists in initiating newcomers into the ceremonies and customs of some particular trans-tribal tribe. Teaching people to participate in ceremonies and in sacraments – "in the mysteries" – is not the heart of the matter, however deep the psycho-somatic effect of the ceremonies may be – and the use of "mysteries" to describe these is a perverted one. The true mysteries – if there are any mysteries – lie quite elsewhere, in what the *Philokalia* calls "the Art of Arts and the Science of Sciences"; and in the great religious centuries, not only in the East but also in the West, it was taken for granted that this was so.

At this point, inevitably, the cat comes out of the bag and we look at it. Religion is about contemplation: it is not about anything else. This is the distinctive element it brings into the life of the tribe, and still more into that of the trans-tribal tribe. It combines of course with the elements of shared ethics and mutual aid, but it cannot be reduced to ritualized tribal ethics in symbolic form (though some anthropologists have wanted to reduce it just to this). If, therefore, contemplation is a genuine and primary human activity, then religion teaches something genuine and deep and primary. If it is not – if, in particular, contemplation is only sublimated sex – then religion is only about something which is biologically secondary and therefore not very important; for we would do infinitely better, biologically speaking, to get our sex unsublimated and neat, rather than sublimated and distorted; which we can (still at some human cost) now do.

If, however, there is even a 10 per cent. chance that the activity of contemplation *per se* exists, and that it matters, and that it can trigger off a fundamental and attractive change in the pattern of human spontaneity, then it is very important indeed, for the future of the human race, to find out what it is. Is it, for instance, an art, knowledge of which we once possessed, but have now largely lost?

A further complication is that what religious teachers claim that they can teach is both something totally public, and something highly private, which is damaging unless it is specifically varied for each individual. We want the most public possible theory of the psycho-physiology of contemplation, yes: but we also want to conserve a total religious privacy to protect the learning individual; which those psychiatrists who publish thinly disguised case-histories of their patients, by no means always do. Moreover that part of the general theory which will become public will have to be quite different from any religious metaphysics or public doctrine which is available now.

We have said "Religion is about contemplation"; yet Christianity came to be thought of as primarily a story about its founder, and Buddhism (to a lesser extent) as a story about *its* founder. But – taking now Christianity – before it became primarily thought of as a religion of doctrines about Christ – before Christ had been crucified, and so before there could be any doctrines about him – what was he himself concerned to teach? Here the New Testament criticism of the last three generations goes round and round. It has ended up to date by looking at the Gospels as tendentious documents written to make the points about Christ that the Apostolic Age wanted to make. Maybe the Gospels are this; but they also show Jesus as saying that the Kingdom of Heaven has come – it is within you – and the stories about the Kingdom of Heaven show a democratic, trans-tribal breakthrough, marked by generous ways of behaving which cut across set notions of ethnic groups, roles and status. But was the Kingdom of Heaven just a notion about a trans-tribal community, or was it also about a community which could be taught access to a "way of salvation"? The ancient world was obsessed with looking for "ways of salvation"; ancient philosophy was never detached from this concern, nor was ancient science. Ancient science, especially medicine, was not just a learned experimental profession. It was a "mystery" and "art"; and there was no clear separation between the scientific and the occult. We need to read the Gospels realizing their background was a culture of this kind, common to the East and Near East, and affecting synagogue Judaism as well. Behind the language about angels and demons we want to look for the impulse after contemplative development, seen as a release from dark powers in the body and mind, and as promoting the emergence of creative, healing powers. New Testament critics have not primarily read the Gospels asking whether the teaching of the Kingdom was "contemplative" in this sense; the main tradition of the world of New Testament scholarship was formed before the mystical classics of the East and West had made their impact (these were not published in

accessible form until late in the nineteenth century).

We now have the mystical classics, but we have no longer got a living tradition of teachers with the know-how to pass it on. People are looking desperately for occult masters and in their desperation are often prepared to be impervious to the scientific status of some of the teachings (for instance, the astrology) which they are given. We need to be able to get behind the symbolic language of the contemplative teachings (see the diagram on p. 26). We need help from sciences such as endocrinology, neuro-physiology and depth-psychology (not that we have a satisfactory form of this). Then we might get a fresh start on seeing what the teaching in the New Testament was (noting that it was bound up with healing stories, both in the Gospels and in the Acts of the Apostles).

This would give us something which could be universal and could make sense. But meanwhile very few can even see it; some of us, who begin to see it, can't quite believe it; practically no one can teach it.

This is what the controversy over monasticism ought to be about.

\* \* \*

In an exploratory article in this number Lewis Braithwaite, an engineer who has written on conservation, suggests how technological changes, which at present all too often make a mess of our environment, could be imaginatively used to promote cycles in which they can lead to a further stage of renewal, and even enhancement of the environment. Our interest in this in *T. to T.* is not to call attention to a set of problems of which everyone else is aware – any Sunday paper shows that plenty of people are disturbed by what technology is doing to our environment. Our concern is to ask whether some of the measures already being thought about could be extended imaginatively in non-obvious ways, by having engineering technologists ask fundamental, but technologically specific, questions about what it would be like to enhance life. We are not thinking primarily about economic profitability. We are concerned to stop moaning about “values” which are being destroyed and to look instead at the ingenious, beautifying, and even in the end profitable things that could be done if we were prepared to take the extra trouble. We hope to follow up Lewis Braithwaite’s article with others, such as one from Charles Ross, co-managing Director of Miles Romans Ltd. and designer of the Scan Stock Exchange Multi-Access System, on using computers to answer back computers; from John Walker, Chief Engineer of Rugby Portland Cement, on transporting products in bulk in underground pipes (which can be cheaper and get them off the roads), and from Tim

Eiloart, Manager of "Aim Associates" (formerly Cambridge Consultants), on ways of dealing with effluents.

\* \* \*

In *T. to T.* Vol. III, October 1968 there was a discussion of John Bleibtreu's book *The Parable of the Beast* in which some of the basic issues which the book raises were left unresolved. We want to run a serial in the hope of getting further light on these from the point of view of the interests of *T. to T.*

The "impossible objects" cover designs have proved popular and we shall continue them in our next four numbers.

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The week-end conference for the readers of *T. to T.* announced in the Spring number, was held at Holly Royde, the residential centre of the Extra-Mural Department of the University of Manchester, during the week-end of July 5th to 6th. Twenty-five people attended, and discussions were introduced by Max Payne (of the City College of Education, Sheffield) on "Towards a Scientific Philosophy of Religion"; Dorothy Emmet on "Detachment and Commitment on the Study of Religion"; Joan Miller on "Exploring Inner Space"; and Ted Bastin on "Looking Ahead" – this last opening up the questions of some themes to be followed up in *T. to T.* The conference suggested that *T. to T.* should give more attention to basic questions in the philosophy of science, which it was said were often presupposed rather than uncovered. There was also a view that there should be further exchanges between readers of the journal and members of the editorial group, and that another conference might be arranged next year. We will try to do this; but part of the object of the exercise should be a wider spread of responsibility both for the journal and for initiating discussions.

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Readers may have noticed this number is dated "September 1969". They should by now have received a letter from the Pergamon Press explaining that it wishes to bring our subscription year into line with that of its other journals, i.e. January to January. Hitherto our subscription year has run from October to October. By making this issue appear in September, and span the July and October issues, readers will receive four issues for their present subscription (October 1968, January, April, September 1969) and new subscriptions for the four issues of Volume IV will run from January 1970.

# Dialogue between Francis and Patrick : Explaining Living Organisms

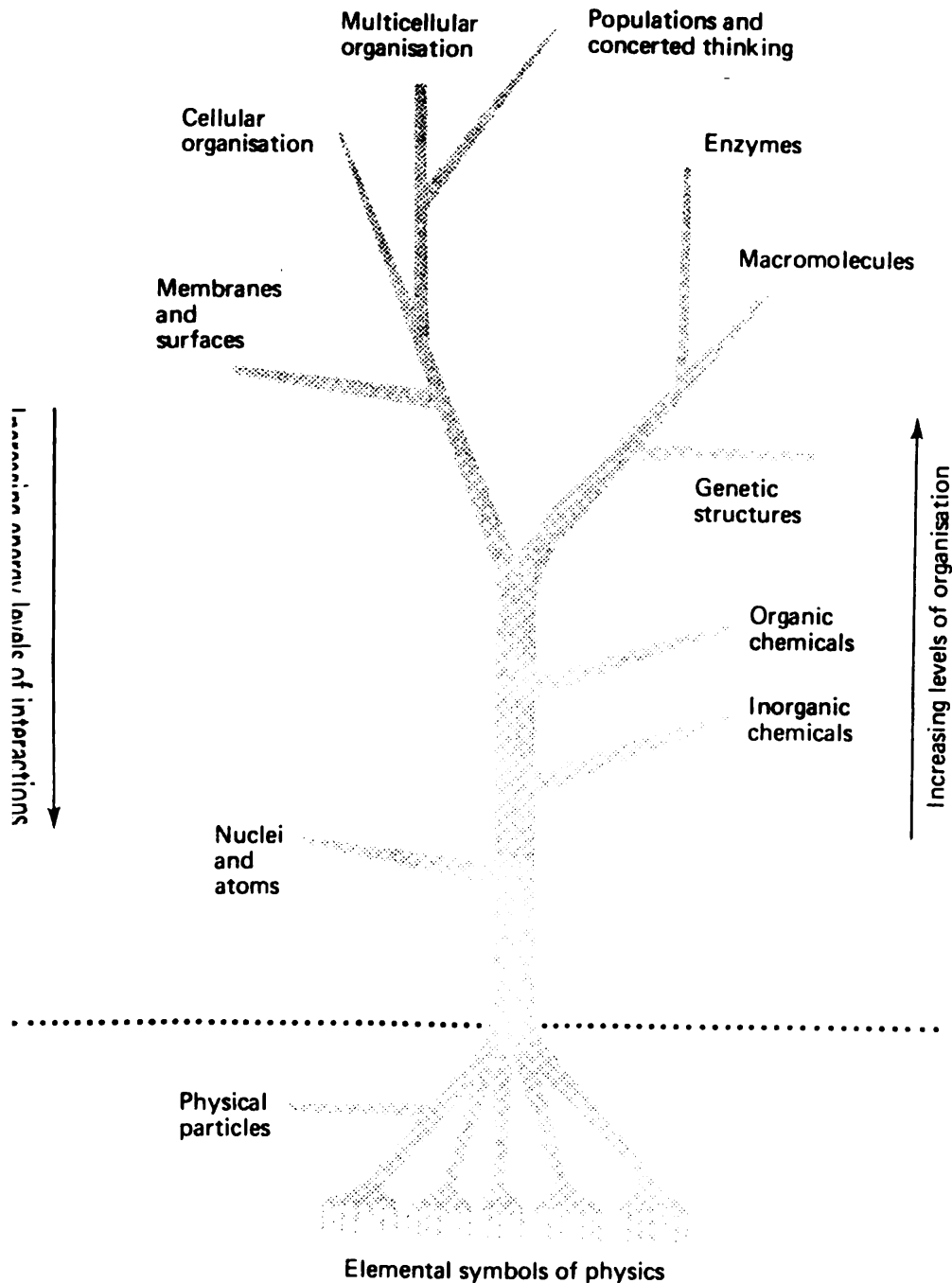
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*(Francis Steel, Senior Lecturer in Anatomy, University College, Cardiff, and Patrick Bateson, Senior Assistant in Research, Sub-department of Animal Behaviour, Cambridge.)*

**FRANCIS:** As an anatomist I regard the organism as the natural unit for any part of biological study, but I know that many biological scientists regard this approach as too naïve, and demand that explanations proceed from the cell, or perhaps from some sort of sub-cellular unity.

**PATRICK:** And I, as a student of animal behaviour spend some of my time examining the reaction of organisms to each other, and to their environment. However, much of animal behaviour is spontaneous and cannot easily be predicted from a knowledge of the external conditions. To obtain a more complete knowledge of the animal we have to go inside it, and in so doing our units of measurement may cease to be the activities of the organism as a whole.

**FRANCIS:** Do you then take the cell as your unit? Jacques Monod (in *The Listener*, 2nd March 1967) developed a computer-model of the cell. He was asked “If the cell, then, is a machine and nothing but a machine, how far up the ladder can we go? What about a group of cells, an organ?” He replied “I think it is correct to say – and most molecular biologists would agree with me – that a group of cells, that is to say the tissue, an organ, and eventually an organism, expresses the properties of the original cells, plus the enormous surplus of complexity and information and specificity which results from the interaction of these cells one with the other. So that eventually no basic satisfying ultimate interpretation of the working of the higher organisms like man could be obtained unless you could account for the fundamental interactions at the cell level, or between two cells”. From a different article – one by Raymond Appleyard, who is Director of Biological Services, Euratom – I have taken a diagram called “Today’s tree of Science”, which presents a similar way of thinking to that of Monod. You see the “populations and concerted thinking” coming out of the same explanatory tree as gives rise to the cell.



**PATRICK:** I expect I had better begin to establish my position with regard to all this. It adds very little at least to my understanding of biology to be told that multicellular organisms are more complex than single cells, which in their turn are more complex than molecules. And to arrange biological material along some linear order of complexity, as Appleyard does, seems to me pretentious and silly. My view is that while I wish to understand the behaviour of whole animals in



physiological terms, one could never arrive at such an understanding purely on the basis of physiological knowledge. In other words one cannot be a reductionist without something, in this case behaviour, to reduce. So while I am sympathetic with Monod's aspirations, I think he puts the cart before the horse, if he wishes to *build up* an understanding of the whole organism from the understanding of the cell. I think that the writers you quote have been willing – even eager – to throw away a whole range of convenient kinds of description – of behaviour for example – on which we are going to have to rely for an indefinite time to come. On the other hand I do see their point, when they set up the complete sort of explanation as an ideal, for we ought to be satisfied with nothing less, and that is the direction in which science has developed in the past.

FRANCIS: Isn't it a search for complete explanation which Monod and his friends are hoping to achieve by extrapolating from the way they understand the cell? I find considerable difficulties in this, and would like to refer to criticisms of it, which Ted Bastin made in his review of Crick's recent book, *Of Molecules and Men*, in *T. to T.* (Oct. 1967). He discusses the computer model, namely the view that the cell consists essentially of information expressed by means of a computer code, which dictates the operations of the animal itself, seen as analogous to the computer. The argument is extremely compressed and I don't think I can compress it any more. So I will quote a page of his argument:

I do not want to consider the anti-vitalist case further from any general philosophical position regarding completeness in science. Rather, I want to investigate the completeness claims in the detailed context of Crick's discussion. Crick takes his stand on "our ordinary notions of physics and chemistry", and though of course he uses chemistry continually it is surprising how little he uses physics. What he does use, in considerable detail, is the computer model. The mechanisms for transferring information and for replicating structure that he describes are entirely digital processes depending on matching of ordered sets (strings) of discrete units which are recognizable in a completely all-or-none-manner. The best way to speak is to say that the processes of deduction (in the theory Crick describes) are all, or almost all, combinatorial. This character does not, of course, separate them sharply from the arguments one finds in many branches of physics and chemistry (especially chemistry) but the "ordinary notions of physics and chemistry" are always expressed on a background of dynamics, whereas in Crick's discussion the dynamics is scarcely referred to. It is this characteristic of Crick's argument – that the dynamics underlying the combinatorial system can be ignored as a first approximation and then dealt with piecemeal as occasion demands and as new

information comes to hand – that makes his repeated use of the computer analogy especially important for him, and also especially important for me to examine. In the case of the computer, the assumption that a suitable dynamical background to the combinatorial process can be taken for granted till more is known about it, is obviously reasonable. What we make a computer out of is well known to be irrelevant to its functioning provided only that the proper functions are obtained somehow. In the short history of computers there is hardly a single function that has not been implemented mechanically in several totally different ways. We are therefore justified in not minding what the engineers make computers of. Biological systems are different, however, in that no such sharp differentiation of combinatorial function from choice of material is possible. Molecular biology – on its own showing – is trying to show us a biological organism as a computer which is built out of its own tape! That is – to be slightly less aphoristic – to say that coding material and structural material coincide, and here perhaps lies the central excitement of molecular biology. However exciting, though, it is going to land us in enormous problems of control design which will have no counterpart in computer practice whatever.

The reason I have quoted this from Bastin is that until we have a deductive theory, we cannot in fact say whether or not it will resemble any of those now current in physics and chemistry; personally I think it is reasonable to expect that they will have to be considerably different from anything we are now familiar with, if they are really to take the problem of control at the cell level any further; that is my hunch. Monod and Crick have a right to their hunch, but they have no right to extrapolate blindly and uncritically from successful science into unfamiliar country. In that review Bastin enlarged on the difficulties of doing this in this particular instance. It would take too long to repeat all he said but if you are interested look it up.

PATRICK: What conclusion do you draw from this?

FRANCIS: I oppose the view that there is any ultimate level of explanation. You see if you look critically at these notions of coding and computing-system, realising at the same time that it is atomic structures which have to implement them in the living cell, you find yourself forced back much further into the origin of the stability of the atom and the nature of information. So there is no natural resting place.

PATRICK: I don't disagree with this, but I sense an element of obscurantism entering into your argument. I don't want to lose the coherence of numerous explanatory levels. In common with many other research scientists my purpose is to define the conditions that specify the outcome of a process. Stated this way it sounds easy but the

most difficult part of attaining the ideal is getting the insights that lead to testable hypotheses. All sorts of devices are needed to make full use of the way we perceive things and, indeed, to overcome our limitations. One of these devices is to classify the material. Another is to imbue the system we are interested in with purpose or, more publicly, to postulate the goal which the activities of the system make more probable. Then again we may look for causal relations in our attempts to predict events. My knowledge of philosophy is poor but I see all these activities as part of an inductive process. They can be applied at an organism level or at a molecular level. There is no necessary commitment to reducing phenomena to a lower level; each inductive process can be applied at any one level. This point is perhaps best illustrated in a table.

		Inductive Process		
		Classification	Teleological explanation	Causal explanation
Level of operation	Population of organisms			
	Organism			
	Cell			
	Molecule			

Having made the point, I don't wish to imply that "level of operation" is anything other than convenient abstraction. Furthermore, in order to attain the ideal of being able to predict fully what a system will do it may be essential to relate what goes on at one level to what goes on at another, which may be the most legitimate demand for a unified explanation. For certain problems the organism defined in the old terms as a natural unit is perfectly adequate. Indeed for some problems – particularly those which involved the interaction of organisms with each other – we may need a larger unit still, e.g. a population. However, if we are interested in the mechanism of inheritance or the origin of life, we may have to re-evaluate our conception of the organism completely. I think that biologists tend to look for discontinuities, in their subject matter, but periodically they may have to recognize that there may be continuities underlying these apparent discontinuities, which are obscured by the kind of structure they are trying to impose on their material.

FRANCIS: If you are saying that the discontinuities are a projection or reflection of something in the nature of the observer rather than something having absolute existence, then that would be what Monod was saying.

PATRICK: I tend to regard the unit as the thing I am seeing as a whole at the time. I can't think of cases where I want to abandon the old biological classification completely. But on the other hand I should not want to say there was any absolute quality about these units. The case of the slime mould, *Dictyostelium*, might help me to explain my attitude. *Dictyostelium* spends much of its life going around as a unicellular creature.

FRANCIS: Is it a plant or an animal?

PATRICK: Well it's an animal, an amoeba-like creature. When a spore settles on a suitable medium, it grows into something about which if you saw it under a microscope you'd say, "There's an amoeba". Then when the conditions are right, you'd see them come together, whereas previously they had been living purely individual existences, and then they form effectively a multicellular organism.

FRANCIS: Generally increase in complexity of behaviour of an organism goes along with some obvious increase in complexity of structure. Moreover the increase in complexity of structure, whether it happens evolutionarily or in the growing embryo, is organic, in the sense that the new structure develops with continuity out of existing structure. Now we want to say the Monod-like person feels he can deal with this situation, using control principles that already exist in the cell, without their having to be improbably complex themselves, because he can reasonably imagine the behaviour at each stage, as the result of the operation of the cellular control system existing at that stage. (He may be too sanguine but we will let him have it for the moment.) Now the point about *Dictyostelium* which gives us a shock, is that in this case, a new level of behaviour and of structure appears at one go, without benefit of this organic development. Of course your Monod would have to place all the control information back in each individual cell. But then he's all that much more implausible.

PATRICK: It seems to me that one has got to retain an evolutionary approach and to say that at some point those things that one now regards as absolute units have been something else. If you regarded *Dictyostelium* as simply a multicellular structure, you'd be wrong. On the other hand, if you take the cell as your basic unit, you have got to ask what are the basic characteristics that define it as a cell. Is it a nucleus? Then that excludes bacteria. Is it a capacity to lead an independent existence? That excludes the viruses. I think that one's

definition will depend on what one is looking for at any given time.

FRANCIS: I think you still have an idea of an unquestioned ultimate level of explanation, which is so much a part of you, that you are granting Monod his main position by default.

PATRICK: I should want to make a distinction between the methods of description and explanation we must use in the course of doing the work, and the object of the whole exercise. Probably I would share this object with Monod, but in the course of my actual work would use methods of which I think you would approve. In dealing with complex systems, I would sometimes look for the outcome, the goal of a complex series of events, rather than the mechanistic laws that link all those events together. (I hope you won't jump on me for using the word "mechanistic"; I mean you have got to be able to see how the elements interact.) Once you've defined the outcome, you can look for the antecedents of it and do a causal analysis. We could for example describe separately every way in which a dog gets a rabbit in the mouth, but in the early stages we find it much more helpful to talk about the dog as hunting. This approach is a very helpful way of grouping together a whole complex of processes.

FRANCIS: With a view to approaching it causally?

PATRICK: Yes, because experimentally antecedents can be manipulated more easily than outcomes, in trying to understand how the whole system works.

FRANCIS: That's a very interesting point. Let me develop it with an example from pathology. If you consider the inflammatory reaction, you can say there is a tissue response to deal with some sort of harmful stimulus. People have provided quite adequate causal explanations of what is happening, but the causal explanation by itself never adds up to anything that is very meaningful. You end up with a disjointed collection of descriptions following from the physical state of the organism before the stimulus arrived, but the explanation takes on an altogether greater significance when you approach the matter holistically, fitting it in to the whole of the life of the organism.

PATRICK: We agree that holistic accounts of the organism are necessary. Where we seem to disagree is in the extent to which accounts of the whole organism can be reduced to physiology and biochemistry.

FRANCIS: Look here, let's try and get more light by considering my example of the inflammatory reaction. One can talk about it in terms of physical forces in blood and tissue, and give a perfectly good explanation of what happens. But it seems to me (and if I am mistaken will you tell me why?) that to say the purpose of the inflammatory reaction is to deal with the invading agent is to say something rather

more significant. In this case surely the causal antecedents provide your description and the teleological way of looking at it comprises your explanation.

**PATRICK:** No, I don't agree with that. I regard both causal and teleological explanations as devices for achieving a complete analysis, and when one has arrived at the stage where one can fully predict the outcome of a system, there will be an exact correspondence between the two explanations. In getting there what I was saying was that the lumping together of all these mechanisms that lead to a common goal could often be a useful device. But I don't think it has this added value you seem to attribute to it.

**FRANCIS:** But won't there be an associated range of facts, not only of feelings? My approach to a patient as a medical practitioner is meaningless unless I can communicate with him as a whole animal – “holistically”. I don't think you could have a motive for practising any form of therapy without this. You find an animal is not working well – there is an abnormal passage through the septum between the right and left chambers of the heart. Can you say this situation *requires* dealing with, unless you say that you have here an organism that is a single unit, and there is here a situation which is undesirable – a disease? Can you talk about disease at a cellular level?

**PATRICK:** Yes, if you were dealing with a virus.

**FRANCIS:** But the disease of the septum has no meaning in cellular terms.

**PATRICK:** No, but in organ terms it does.

**FRANCIS:** I see your point, that you have a use for explanations – sometimes, in terms of goals and functions – of many different sorts, which you will expect to be coherent, when your treatment of a problem has reached that stage of detailed accuracy, which the scientist has as his ideal. But I claim that none of these explanations is complete, and this is why in what I said about Monod's extrapolation from the cell to society, I tried to show how the computer-like mechanistic analogy wasn't a complete explanation, even at the cell level. Now you want to complete it by a view of the possibility of a total analysis, which nevertheless allows a place for various other kinds of explanation, and I haven't allowed for this possibility. However when it comes to acts of faith, mine is against yours. And when it comes to extrapolating to persons – damn it all, what I feel impelled to say about persons, especially in their inner conscious moral life, makes me see that I have probably been arguing with you on the wrong tack, because what I want to say about an organism can't in the end be separated from knowledge that I have in

virtue of the fact that I am myself one organism, that I can describe. I began to hint at this in what I said about the doctor-patient relation.

**PATRICK:** In no way do I want to deny the value of introspection or the intuitive approach in dealings with a patient. However if you infer that because these approaches are valuable there is something essentially unanalysable about Man, you are committed then to proving a negative if you want to convince me you are right. Many seemingly intractable systems have been worked out in the past and I prefer to think that your views of Man simply reflect our current ignorance. My act of faith is to believe that all the marvellously complex things which seem to defy analysis at the moment can and will be understood, and when I say "understood", I mean analysed as an interacting system of mechanisms, describable at different levels.

**FRANCIS:** And how would you ever know you had reached completion?

**PATRICK:** By finding that the outcome of the system was fully predictable.

[The diagram on p. 9 is reproduced with permission from *Euratom*, 1966 (4) – Ed.]

## Review Discussion

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**Against All Reason** (Geoffrey Moorhouse) *I. William Slade, S.S.J.E.*

“According to all wisdom”

The Religious Life, like all other forms of Christian Life, is at present under the fierce scrutiny of modern investigation techniques. Its hiddenness has been uncovered by the television camera, its intimate problems have been discussed and even its motives have been interpreted by those who have never shared the experiences of this vocation. All this is part of the price the Religious must pay for living in an age of instant communication.

But this kind of probing does not necessarily lead to a truer picture of the Religious Life than was given by the slower and more discreet methods of the past. Where there is a lack of deep sympathy on the part of the investigator and where much of his material is drawn from sources which do not even claim to represent the Religious Life in its most complete and integrated forms, then a serious distortion of both its purposes and achievements can result.

This seems to have happened in Geoffrey Moorhouse's recent investigation of the Religious Life in his book *Against All Reason*. Not only does he show signs of having approached his work in an unduly critical frame of mind, an attitude revealed in its title and by his flippant description of the religious as “those Christian bachelors and spinsters who live together in monasteries, convents or other communities, and who mostly wear medieval clothes”, but more seriously, he does not seem to have been in touch with those who have deeply penetrated the heart of the Religious Life and understood its essential purposes and those forces which in spite of so many failures are today working in the direction of its renewal and adjustment to meet the demands of this age.

Were the Religious Life concerned only with its own limited world, then this form of journalistic expertise could be passed by in amused silence. But the Religious Life in its essential purpose is concerned with principles of vital and universal concern, with the ultimate purpose behind all life. When Geoffrey Moorhouse gives the impression that religious are busy with frustrations and sexual problems and primarily with that and nothing else, then it is time to reconsider what is the fundamental purpose of this life and to state it beyond the possibility of misunderstanding.



The Religious Life is not the exclusive achievement of the Christian Church. It is a form of life found in many other religions and particularly in the religions of the east where it flourished long before the coming of Christianity and still survives vigorously in such countries as India and Japan. Between the Christian and non-Christian forms of the Religious Life there is such an agreement of purpose as to make each confirm and illustrate the other. This makes it possible to define that purpose with a clarity and emphasis otherwise impossible.

In the non-Christian forms of the Religious Life this purpose is expressed in terms of the attainment of samadhi by which is meant a perfect intimacy with God both in terms of life and vision. This purpose controls the pattern of life through which this end is to be attained. It is a life not merely of self-culture but of positive advance towards God. It is a journey through the paths of detachment, concentration and meditation to such a loss of self as shall lead to the enjoyment of God. Human and personal problems such as frustrations, the itch of sex and doubts are unimportant compared with the majestic simplicity of a pilgrimage which leads to this goal.

Even more emphatically is this same purpose expressed in the lives of the founders of the Christian forms of the Religious Life. For them its goal, both in terms of prayer and life, was not mere perfection but the contemplation of God and union with Him. Most clearly is this expressed in the finally agreed description of the nature and life of God contained in the Chalcedonian definition. The doctrine of the Trinity there formulated describes God in terms of Being with whom the most perfect form of intimacy and life can be attained.

So Abba Isaac speaks for this tradition when he writes:

“Out of these four kinds of prayer (supplication, prayer, intercession, thanksgiving) rises the loftier state of prayer formed by the contemplation of God and by a charity that burns like fire.”

And Father Benson continues in the same tradition in its later form when he writes:

“We are being called into these higher regions of Heaven.”

Contemplation then is the primary purpose of the Religious Life in all its forms, the vision of God and a loving union with Him. Father Cary has summed it for this generation when he writes:

“The Religious Life is not a mere active life, but one of evangelical energy, surcharged with light and charity from the exercise of contemplation.”

It is the contemplative purpose of the Religious Life that places it not so much against all reason as within the environment of wisdom. And when sight of this purpose is lost, then, at this moment which

Geoffrey Moorhouse rightly describes as a "turning-point" in the Religious Life, we could easily follow him in the shallow conclusion that "an unflinching look at sex is the chief need of the Religious Life if the problems of the individual's condition are to be resolved". Something much more radical than that is needed to renew this life in its true purpose.

One of the most hopeful movements within the Religious Life at this time is a renewal of interest in the various forms and disciplines of contemplative life and prayer. Not only are the Christian traditions of this prayer being re-examined but exploration is being carried further afield into the eastern forms of this prayer. It would be a tragedy if this response to the turning point of the Religious Life were diverted into the shallower concerns discussed by Geoffrey Moorhouse. There is need for renewed perseverance along the path of this exploration into contemplation and in this task there is required the help and experience of all those who are sharing this great quest.

## *II Joan Miller*

I found this book depressing. It provides some information about the formation of some Religious Orders, and touches on some of the problems facing the Religious in the modern world, but the overall picture I was left with was one of a radical lack of relevance of Religious Communities to life today. I think the main reason for this effect is that, in spite of some talk about the renewal of monasticism, every community, old or new, still retains the basic structure of the Middle Ages; i.e. withdrawal from the world into an hierarchical ghetto, in which a foreign and stereotyped pattern of life is pursued. By "foreign", I mean a pattern not normal for human beings, for example, withdrawal into a single sex society.

The conception of the Religious Life as an ordered life in which prayer takes priority seems to me to be a valuable one, which has a considerable contribution to make to the life of the world. However if it is to make a contribution it must be relevant, and I cannot see how relevance is to be attained unless the life is lived in the world. This book offered me no hope that the Religious saw their life as being related to the real world, except in a remote way, difficult to prove or justify. I do not think Religious Communities are necessarily examples of perfect Christian living. Christianity is not primarily expressed in withdrawal from engagement in the demands and consequences of ordinary daily

living, but in the involvement of Christians in ordinary human experience without limit, in such a manner that it becomes extraordinary. The spirituality the modern Christian is called upon to practice does not require him to go into the desert and be solitary, like the Early Fathers. For him, his desert is the secular city, and he is solitary. He is only too well aware of his aloneness, and his main difficulty is to forge meaningful relationships, not to withdraw. He has to act in the situations in which he finds himself in the course of his daily life, and to resist the temptation to withdraw into some special kind of society, which he finds more amenable.

It might be said that entry into a Religious Order imposes a discipline which is not all that amenable, and this is no doubt the case, but such discipline is not restricted to Religious Orders. Hair shirts are readily available in daily life; they may even take the form of traffic jams. The frequent frustrations met at work and at home in the course of daily living, which seem to point to an almost universal cursedness of things, can be a considerable discipline, if accepted as such. The demands of modern existence in contemporary society make for far more stringent circumstances than those imposed in any monastery or convent, however difficult life in the latter may appear to be. For one thing, there is a basic security about the Religious Life which is not to be found in the world.

Religious Communities are not meeting the world's needs today, because what the world needs is dedicated, totally committed persons living in its midst, and sharing its problems. I suppose it is not in principle impossible that a Religious Order should have a right relationship with the world, but I think it requires something more than reading newspapers, and I do not see much evidence of such a relationship at present. I suspect the lack of a right relationship with the world is one of the reasons for the absence of vision among Religious today. Early monastic foundations were set up to provide a centre in which, by rigorous discipline and a particular way of life, the understanding of religion and life could be deepened. The aim was to increase perception and discernment, i.e. was towards "vision", and vision was the end of ascetic discipline because it was the sign of union, and the goal was union with God. There is little evidence today that the mere fact of belonging to a Religious Order makes any significant difference to the degree of perception attained by any particular individual, nor is there much evidence that the renunciation involved in entering the Religious Life has had the effect of enlarging knowledge, as it was supposed to do. Generally speaking, it seems at present that the "vision" is in danger of becoming a round of spiritual exercises which

are taken as ends in themselves, instead of means to knowledge and growth in depth.

The material possessions and the institutional character of the established Religious Communities tends to make them inward looking, towards self-preservation. Many examples of this attitude can be found in the current trend in the older Communities, to shut down their smaller out-stations, and withdraw the labour into the Mother House, the result being that service to the Community itself, is given priority over service to those outside. This seems to me to be a repudiation of the fundamental principle of complete self-giving, in a total sense, on which the Religious Life is founded. The picture painted by Mr. Moorhouse in his book did not encourage me in the hope that the Religious Orders have found a way of escaping the straight-jacket of institutionalism, hence I found it depressing.

### *III Mary Anne, Dss.C.S.A.*

From this book it seems possible to draw out two lines of thought. On the one hand the author presents us with a survey of the history of the Religious Orders and their present structure, the breadth of which is indicated by the very considerable bibliography. On the other hand, to the reader trying to probe his whole mind and purpose, the significant question would seem to be "Why does he preface his work with a chapter on the life of the Community at Taizé; is something revealed herein which is vital and central to his thought?" Let us take each of these points in turn.

For the most part Mr. Moorhouse's map of the Religious Life is characterized by honesty, objectivity and sensitivity. It is perhaps fair to comment that the passages quoted in a weekly magazine tended to conceal the latter; the whole book must be read to gain any sort of right perspective. The chapters on "The Structure today", "Prayer and Vocation" are all hard hitting in their frankness, but what is strikingly absent is any judgemental attitude on the part of the author.

Objectivity and sensitivity come over in such places as p. 178 where the discussion on change includes a passage showing that desire for renewal is not confined to any one age group, also that as in any loving human family, kindness and consideration between generations is a must. On p. 182, by a comparison with the particular instance of marriage, he very rightly shows that inarticulateness on a religious vocation is no more and no less than that of anyone trying to explain

their own human emotions. Clichés are probably inevitable in attempts to express any sense of vocation.

The one chapter where Mr. Moorhouse does not seem so objective is that on Authority and Obedience. The passage, p. 161, “Neither he, nor . . . have a will to call their own . . . they have given it away and a terrible weight of law and order has been accumulated over the ages to see that the Church exacts every jot of their obedience from them” jars as over dramatic, even if one tries to take it in its apparent context as referring especially to the weight of actual Canon Law described at the beginning of the chapter. I would question whether some of the comments in this chapter are in fact still valid for Religious Orders today; one small instance of this, the Cistercian Rule given in Appendix 2 is not its current revision. Further Mr. Moorhouse seems to drive a wedge between the Religious Orders and the Church, making the latter seem like a tyrannical overlord, whereas in fact Religious Orders are an integral part of the Church. And deeper still, by concentrating on the imperfections of the human side, he appears not to be able to appreciate this as an attempt to express our *total* commitment to *God*, who alone can ask this of us, though not, I submit, as a “terrible weight of law and order”.

What is the point of this survey? The book’s last chapter is entitled “The Turning Point”, but to what? To answer this we need to take our other question. Why does Mr. Moorhouse put his chapter on Taizé first, and why does he find the life there and the life of the Petits Frères of Charles de Foucauld attractive? Is it because their spirit and ethos ring so true to him? From Chapter 1 one might think so, yet there are points such as on p. 241 where his query “does it mean that a little later the spellbinding liturgy of Taizé will be heard only on a plastic disc or magnetized tape and not felt for the mysterious drama that it is”, shows that this is not the core of his thought. Rather it is the assertion that Taizé and the Petits Frères have been thrown up by the needs of the *twentieth century* within an all-embracing desire *to be true to the gospel*. This incorporates the insights of past generations only as and where they too are seen to be true to the gospel. He rejects Thomas Merton’s rethinking of the Cistercian ideal on the grounds that it is merely an adaptation, for him it is not a question of going back to the pure Benedictine or Cistercian Rule, but the more radical one of whether in this century there should be any talk of Benedictinism at all. The Dominicans have been issued with a comprehensive questionnaire, but quite apart from its practical unwieldiness, in asking, p. 418, about the intentions of the founder and their restatement in modern terms, is it asking anything like the right question? “There must be”, he says on

p. 234, "a complete rereading of the Gospels rather than a return to the **ideals** expressed by the founders of religious orders".

How then does Mr. Moorhouse define the Religious Life? He tells us on p. 242, "The threefold profession in community is almost the **definition** of the Religious Life". Such is his basic thought, and we would follow it though perhaps wanting to emphasize more specifically the vital element of openness to the Holy Spirit, for without this we can get bogged down on the purely human level. But it would be cheating to leave it here; the threefold profession in community *must* be given concrete expression if it is to be a reality. What, according to Mr. Moorhouse, is its right expression in our twentieth century?

My first instinctive reaction on reading this book was to interject "He's made little differentiation in his survey between active and enclosed orders, Roman Catholic or Protestant". But as I thought I became conscious firstly that he *has* made a distinction when it is vital, as when a different culture, African or Indian as opposed to European, is involved, and secondly, as comes out in his final chapter, he sees there is a basic unity in the Religious Life. It can cut across denominational barriers; further, the life of prayer is in no way opposed to that of action as one reading of the Mary/Martha story might have led us to suppose. Undertaken in varying degrees by different people in the same community both may flower. Perhaps my first reaction is in one way true; the author does not always distinguish or date his actual sources, but on the deepest level, this is irrelevant to his purpose and ours.

In the chapter on vocation especially, Mr. Moorhouse devotes a perhaps at first seemingly disproportionate amount of space to the consideration of sexuality. But it is his thesis, p. 231, that "an unflinching look at sex is the chief need of the Religious Life if the problems of the individual's condition are to be resolved". It is certainly true that, *in every walk of life, the* problem of the individual is that of loving and being loved which includes recognizing our sexuality and its part in personality. The Religious' assumption of voluntary celibacy has to be made positive, the very expression and fulfilment of personality. In fact the consensus of the chapter on vocation shows that despite false starts it can be this, but it is something that has to be worked towards. In the past we have tended to assume too readily that "virtue brings its own reward"; certainly our theological bias has been that way. Yet to be truly Christian, whether Religious or not, involves embracing and not sidestepping the *struggle* to be fully human on all levels.

Mr. Moorhouse also suggests that the future pattern for the Religious

Life may involve temporary promises rather than life-long vows. Whilst recognizing that a logical tension can exist between the taking of vows at a specific moment and openness to the Holy Spirit throughout life, it nevertheless seems true to human experience that very often to gain even the lesser one must embrace the greater. Can one be truly stable whilst constantly reviewing one's environment, or is one more likely to end up perpetually running away from the commitment and trust which give depth and enrichment to personality and relationship with God?

Finally I cannot at points help wondering whether Mr. Moorhouse is being completely realistic. Taizé, though compellingly attractive is a young community; it has not yet met the problems of the older brethren and the choice of a successor to the founder. The federation of small communities whilst eminently sensible can be almost overwhelmingly painful. Practical considerations of space and time often preclude the active and enclosed life being lived out in complete proximity, though a strong case can be made out for co-operation and possible interchange for limited periods between the two. And does Mr. Moorhouse make allowance for human frailty? Or does he think we are still caught up in the error, admittedly found in past writings, but not, I think, in the Anglican revival of the Religious Life, and specifically repudiated by Vatican II, of the Religious Life as *the* state of perfection, and per se the higher way? If we did so claim we could not but expect a judgement of a severity proportionate to that claim, but the fact is that though we long to be the disposable pioneer corps the Church needs and asks us to be, and start with certain advantages and responsibilities, we have to admit our frailty, the solidarity of mankind in this as in all things. Yet the book is a challenge. It shows how our witness can strike the person looking in, it exposes our weakness, but can still say (p. 242) "It (the Religious Life), represents as a cold-blooded choice the biggest sacrifice a fulfilled human being can make . . . and a man finding his way to salvation must sometimes fly in the face of reason". This seems to me to reassert the *ultimate* validity and potential of the Religious Life and signifies not despair but hope.

#### *IV The Epiphany Philosophers.*

Having read these three contributions, some of the Epiphany Philosophers held a discussion at which Philip Mairet was present, and the following report was made.

The merit of the book lies not in the showing up of monastic

scandals, though the extracts in *The Observer* Colour Supplement may have produced that impression, but in the fact that Moorhouse has examined the monastic life, from the humanist angle, asking monks and nuns to tell him their secrets and about their rule and lives. He sees that monasticism is important, wider than the Catholic/Protestant distinction, indeed wider than Christianity. What the book lacks is a theory about the deep way of life that lies behind all this, and what triggers it off. This needs going into in terms which will make sense to people who take it for granted that the urge behind it is sublimated sex (whether or not Moorhouse himself thinks this, he does think that a main need for modern monasticism is to have a good look at sexuality). What we should like to see explored is the hypothesis that the monastic life manifests a drive towards *growth*.

There is increasing evidence, strengthened by recent studies of pituitary stimulation and arousal, that deep meditation, as practised in the best ashrams and monasteries, is a goal-directed activity, which can be correlated with high peaks or spurts of secondary growth. The rejuvenating effects of avatura yoga in promoting regeneration of tissue and in slowing down the ageing process are now becoming an accepted subject for medical research; moreover contemplative training, based on one or other form of yoga, is to an increasing extent being incorporated into the training of Olympic athletes. In fact, but for the expository obscurity and pile-up of metaphors with which traditional contemplatives teach and explain contemplation, the psycho-biological fact, that, put colloquially, here is something which has to do with ordinary developmental growth, not with reproduction (sex), would have hit the humanist world far more than it has already; this fact indeed alone would partly explain the fascination of both eastern and western monasticism for humanists. But the "Abbas" and the Guru teach contemplation from introspective evidence, whereas scientific humanism considers growth activity in terms of, e.g. trigger actions of hormones; thus the two types of evidence do not normally come together. The difficulty of showing it summarily is indicated in the diagram on p. 26 (the expression MCC, "Mobile Centre of Consciousness", is adapted from A. Puharich's book *Beyond Telepathy*, which we hope to review in the next number).

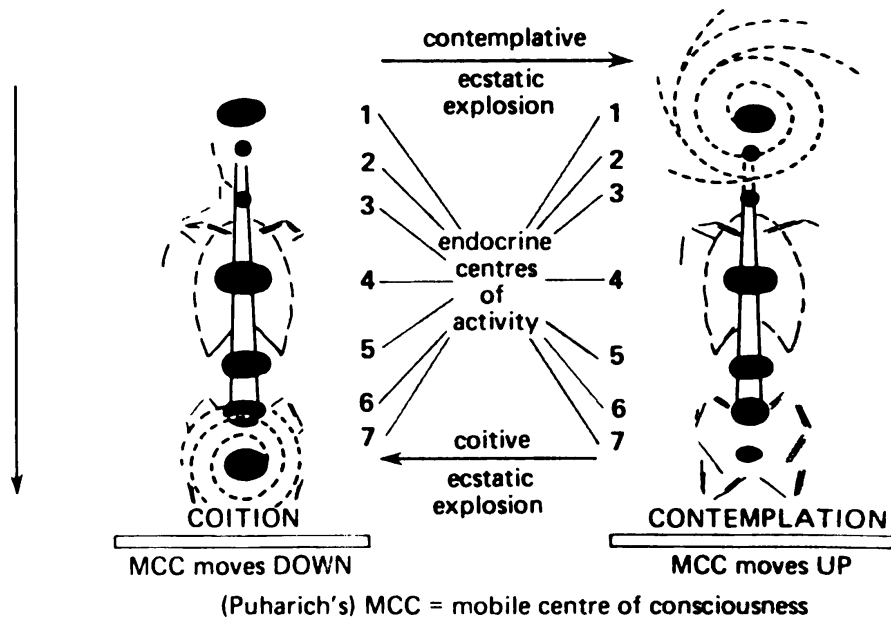
Frances Banks (see *T. to T.*, Vol. III, no. 1) and Thomas Merton, both now dead, were getting on to this; the Institute of Oriental Studies in Paris, and now a research project at the University of Delhi, are also trying to bridge the gap. In ten years time it is exceedingly likely that the quasi-Freudian "religion is all sex" line will be out of date in psycho-analytic discussion, as well as in the ordinary humanist world.



Moorhouse has not been able to give a convincing account of what contemplation can be; what is more serious is that those he talked to were not able to give one either. So he is still asking for an explanation of monastic life.

Some sort of contemplative root seems to be a necessary part of every culture; when this withers, art tends to wither too. (Picasso in a

Introspection based picture of the two deep goal-directed developmental activities in man



conversation with Giovanni Papini has said that art is petering out into cleverness and fashion.) Of course other things are needed too for there to be great art, but it needs at least this deep spring. Another result of the failure of contemplative activity in a society is that the spiritual side of culture tends to devolve on to the political (as when Pompidou moralizes about "*aspirations profondes d'une humanité désorientée*") while the religious side turns into practical social activity and the improvement of secular life.

Universal intellectual education might be thought to run counter to contemplation, but by arousing the will and the psyche it can produce its first stage. Hunger for mystical spiritual experience is stimulated and not fed; one factor in student unrest and drug-taking is that students are looking for further contemplative formation and not getting it. Lots of people are half in love with monasticism, because they hate the

**rat-race.** Moorhouse does not see that monastic discipline was not instituted as a way of getting to heaven, but in the search to understand our own nature, and to “present it to God”; it is not an unhealthy masochism. Monastic vows need not have the same form for everyone, but should suit different vocations. In Eastern Orthodoxy vows are much less important, though this does not mean that monastic is lighter; in Zen and Red Hat Tibetan Buddhism monks can be married, and the vows take the form of obedience to one’s teacher; Sufism is essentially a mystical way for married people.

The monastic idea provides for a particular kind of human being within a culture, and in our society there are other severe disciplines for other kinds of people; for instance those in the Russian Ballet, or those working in maths labs. But the monastic way keeps before people the notion of vocation. It also enshrines the idea of “dying”. Today the penitential side of life gets laughed off, with the idea that it means wallowing in guilt, rather than being a means of healing. At the same time we are generating pressures from which people are not getting healed; people are being damaged by the rat-race, and have only expensive psychiatric help or overcrowded mental hospitals to turn to.

This brings us back to prayer, as something which overlaps with contemplation, but need not always be the same thing. Prayer is something universal and natural, not essentially verbal, perhaps older than language; it involves breathing rather than talking (we must not be too western about this). The monastic tradition can remind us that we should start from silence rather than talk. But we need training, and this can come from hermits and staretzes rather than from communities. The hermit may have a tradition, within which he lives and teaches; but nowadays he needs to be stripped down to go behind the tradition, to see what is the point of its teachings and practices, even being prepared to see that some parts of it may not have a point today. The people of the fifth century who went to live in the desert were doing this with their own tradition, and they were the ones who started a new civilisation, rather than the ecclesiastics who remained in the world. We need a set of deep drop-outs, from whom a new civilisation can start.

A contemplative state of mind can be a condition of illuminative thinking, notably in scientific and intellectual work; but also in forms of fine skill and craftsmanship. Nowadays these activities have split off from monastic contemplation. In earlier centuries monasteries were centres of serious work, such as book production, nursing and education; these activities have necessarily now mostly moved away from them (though the nursing orders that still operate are outstanding

in their work). The activities that religious orders now undertake instead of being forms of intellectual work that really stretch the mind tend to be trivial occupations such as making Christmas cards or altar breads (why not stick to ordinary bread?), or rococo ones such as making scents and distilling liqueurs. Contemplation ought to provide conditions out of which difficult thinking can come. In fact, in secular life, intellectuals try to produce some of these conditions for themselves, as when they shut themselves up to finish a book or a scientific experiment, and adopt routine occupations as recreation to rest the mind without diverting it too much.

The monastic orders, out of love of God and His people, were also able to maintain a loving therapeutic community, into which people came and out of which they went to various kinds of work; but when the love goes wrong it turns to hate. Now there is all too often stereotypy, instead of creativity, coming out of love and quietness.

The cure for this may be not only in seeing how humanist groups can be more monastic-like, but also how monastic groups can become more humanist-like; monastic orders can provide a training to produce common sense and stability in an ecstatic state, and keep the ideal of human dignity. Humanists could institute an open transhumanism of a contemplative sort, and the best monasteries could join them in this, while the others would die off. The ideal university and the ideal monastery have a good deal in common.

But deep monasticism still stands for something which the humanist doesn't really see, the need for "dying" – abandonment – what the penitential training is about. Monasticism used to be thought to imply "a double standard" for lay Christians and "Religious". This of course it doesn't do; but what it can do is to set a contemplative standard.

*Reply by Geoffrey Moorhouse*

I must obviously start with an apology. I think my book must have hurt William Slade where it hurts most (I can't believe that he's dishonest or that he didn't read *Against All Reason* properly, which would be the only other possible explanations for the position he's taken) and so I'm very sorry indeed. But really . . . What on earth is flippant about describing ("in crude and worldly terms" I said, and I notice that has been artfully left out) religious as "those Christian bachelors and spinsters who live together in monasteries, convents or other communities, and who mostly wear medieval clothes."? It is the literal truth, isn't it? And what inordinate arrogance decides that I haven't

been in touch with those who have deeply penetrated the heart of the religious life when my Acknowledgements make it clear that I have done a fair bit of brain-picking around three or four superiors of religious communities, Dom David Knowles and several other less distinguished people – not to mention the dozens of books listed in the bibliography, mostly written by religious themselves. Nor can, I think, my title show that I've approached the subject in an unduly critical frame of mind; it was almost a straight lift of a phrase from the Taizé vow formula. Critical I have been, indeed, and I'm sorry if H. E. W. Slade (who doesn't seem to be any laggard himself in that direction) expects me to accept the tablets he's handing down from the mountain without question, but I can't. Unlike him I wasn't professionally reared in the awful shadow of R. M. Benson, who believed that it was no concern of people at large to know what a religious community was up to.

I think I should be as depressed as Joan Miller seems to be if the religious world today was entirely populated by people who thought along those lines. I don't believe it is, by a long way. And although I take her point about the relevance of the life only if it is lived in the world (which doesn't mean that I share it entirely) she seems to be ignoring the fact that a great number of religious – the majority, in fact, one way or another – are in daily contact with the world as the rest of us know it. Did the book *really* offer her no hope that religious saw their life as being related to the "real world" (whatever that might be)? When it is sprinkled with quotations from Taizé and from the Petits Frères which make precisely the point that, for them, the life has got to key in with the norms of twentieth century society? And it just is not on to say loftily that "Religious communities are not meeting the world's needs today, because what the world needs is dedicated, totally committed persons living in its midst, and sharing its problems". Has the woman never heard (to take just one example) of Mother Teresa and her Missionaries of Charity who are sweating it out in Calcutta on a shoestring, caring – among a lot of other things – for 9,000 lepers whom no-one else will touch with a bargepole; not the local hospitals, not Calcutta Corporation, not Joan Miller, not me. She might do a lot worse than to slip a couple of quid in their direction, as a penitential gesture after that howler.

It is Sister Mary Anne who comes closest to hitting my own personal nail on the head. I'm inclined, in retrospect, to agree with her that my chapter on authority and obedience maybe made things seem tougher than they really are today; but that is only a hunch which is difficult of proof. The fact is that the people in religion who were prepared to talk

openly about the life were, by definition, the ones who have moved farthest away from the most stultifying traditions of the religious life and they were a small minority of the religious population. Maybe one over-estimated the majority, relying too much on available documentary sources which indicated a tradition which was still for the most part a rigid one. (The Cistercian Rule, incidentally, was revised only a month before publication of *Against All Reason*, making it physically impossible to do more than indicate that the 1964 edition printed was in process of re-examination.) And one reason for starting with a chapter on Taizé was because it seems to me that there, above most religious communities I have visited, they have managed a fusion of tradition and radicalism that points one of the ways ahead for the religious life as a whole. It is partly, as Sister Mary Anne guesses, because the spirit and ethos of the place ring true to me. It is also because there I have felt myself closer to the mystery of the religious life (of faith itself) which is its heart, than almost anywhere else I've been. It has a great deal to do with silence, balanced with significant activity.

For if I'm asked what the purpose of the religious life is as I have found it so far (and I'm still trying to get to the bottom of it) my answer has to be as diffuse as vocation itself. It is partly a matter of – to paraphrase the notions of Taizé and René Voillaume – taking the next man as you find him, unselfconsciously, and of offering him whatever he wants in the way of care and affection; nothing more or less. But as this is no more than the Christian vocation at large as I understand it, there has to be something special to the religious. Isn't this merely that this particular way of living happens to be – in crude and worldly terms, if William Slade doesn't mind my using them – the one most suitable to the individual's temperament, if he is to find why he is here and what it is all about, with the minimum of self-waste? This is not to imply a soft option (though I don't doubt that a good many people have found themselves in the cloister because it seemed a soft option from something else); you don't have to read very deeply in the literature of the religious life to find that for many there is intermittent agony till the day they die. But some people need that struggle, need if you like a kind of masochism to struggle with and against. It is struggle that promotes growth for many. And though the discussion group can be offered hundreds of examples of the struggle having promoted not growth but atrophy, that surely is because the wrong people have been enticed into the religious context. I agree with the group that the idea of monasticism must essentially originate with a desire to understand our own nature (though if it is being represented

that this was its codified, institutional starting point I'd like chapter and verse for that). The trouble is, *pace* Sister Mary Anne, that it became used as something between a carrot and a stick by the Church *pour encourager les autres*. I'm glad to think William Slade agrees with me that a turning point in all this has now been reached. I'd love to know, though, how he would distinguish the religious life from the secular one.

# Enhancing Life through Technology: an introductory article

*Lewis Braithwaite*

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Almost every reference to technology in the press gives a depressing picture of it as a threat to human existence and values. Admittedly almost all news nowadays seems depressing – “no news is good news” – but the continual moan about technology inhibits action and makes many of the gloomy visions self-fulfilling.

In fact the position in this country at least is not as hopeless as the all-out preservationists would have us believe. In recent years a considerable number of amenity societies have been formed, the Consumer Association with its journal *Which* has exerted considerable influence, and public participation in planning is now official government policy. And there was Stansted. But unfortunately many of the engineers and other technologists who have the detailed knowledge to be comparatively cheerful do not write articles for the press (and often can't write even if they do want to), and so invaluable instances of technology enhancing life rather than limiting it never become known. The first thing to do, therefore, is to stir up the technologists to give us plenty of good solid facts, to use as ammunition against the politicians and decision makers who try to look “tough” by always proposing an immediate short-term “economic” solution; for it is those confident in their technological skills that are now the humanists, with a passionate concern for human values, rather than pseudo-arts men trying to cover up a guilt feeling for not being technologically trained themselves.

The first place to start is on the environmental front, for it is here that technology can most easily clear up its own mess. It is not the fact that the waste and spoil is a by-product of the manufacture of articles (which we all want) that is so depressing, but the fact it is waste at all, i.e. it is not used again and created into something new. We would feel quite different about the spread of suburbia in south-east England if we felt that the abandoned airfields and pit villages were returning to be moorland and country again. Or if colliery spoil could be transported and used to fill the Bedfordshire claypits, create new islands in the sea, or reclaim Foulness for the Third London Airport. (One of the later articles will show how the economics of bulk transport can be transformed by the use of pipes.) So if instead of irreversible, one way

**technological PROCESSES** there were only technological CYCLES, as in much of nature, we would feel much more cheerful; for then much of technology would merely be a re-allocation of material resources rather than using them all up, and the bogey of an inexorable tide of concrete would fade away. And instead of fighting an inevitably hopeless battle to preserve the existing countryside and townscape as it is now, much more positive steps should be taken to create NEW recreational facilities, NEW countryside, NEW landscape, NEW beauty with the products that are spoiling the old. Not everything that man produces is faceless, drab, and ugly; Venice is a creation of man, as is much of the tree-planted and hedge-lined English countryside.

The idea of cycles implies a delicate natural environmental initial steady-state which should not be upset, and thus moving in cycles is associated with another concept, the idea of BALANCE. And both these ideas can be extended beyond the immediate physical environment; in a sense “answering back”, or successfully changing the policy of a large organization, is completing an information cycle, and “balance” can also be taken to mean social balance (a balanced community), demographic balance – with people of all age-groups – balanced use of land (multi-use) or balanced design. These rather vague concepts of “balance” and technological “cycles” need much greater elaboration, but they are a preliminary attempt to tie together the ways in which technology can enhance life, and even in their more extended meanings they are still both desirable aims. Perhaps a clearer idea of the validity of these terms will emerge from the discussion of specific technical issues.

The fear of technology is now so widespread and often so irrational that it is worth looking at more closely, since in almost every case cited counter examples can be produced of how technology can be used to enhance life rather than crush it. There are three main threads, and they cover all aspects of man’s life and experience from the economic to the psychological and aesthetic.

The first is posed by technology’s complexity, scale and speed of change. Due to specialization, people’s individual skills become obsolete, and confronted by huge organizations, many people feel insignificant and powerless. An example of the scale, and one of its related problems, was cited by Anthony Wedgwood Benn in a recent *Listener* article, “Technology in Human Terms” [1]: “Colonel Borman may have been able to speak to one billion people as he went round the Moon: but if we had wished to reply we would have had some difficulty. There is a one-sidedness about communications technology. Answering back is awfully difficult. What people have to do is to go out



into the streets with a placard, using the *communications technology* of the Stone Age, and hope that a television camera will pick out the placard”.

It might seem hopeless to deal with these pressures, though Mr. Benn does outline some sort of solution; but the management of the strike-bound British Steel Corporation at Port Talbot would read their blast furnacemen's alleged powerlessness with wry amusement, and the recent landing on the Moon used a fantastically elaborate technological apparatus to give people all over the world a sense of adventure and excitement, while showing that men were still needed to operate the capsules, take observations and make critical decisions.

The second thread in the disillusion with technology is the tendency for everything all over the world to become much the same. For instance the visual identity and distinct character of many of our historic towns have been eroded by drab faceless “developments” which make it difficult to remember which town one is in – and less worth visiting any at all. As a statement of the disgust many people feel, here is a description of the re-developed city of Gloucester by an enraged native [2]: “I don't want to live there now, hemmed in by the ring road, the trading estate, with hardly a word of ‘Glawster’ heard in the streets . . . (It has) no identity, no living unique Gloucesterness any more, just mid-twentieth-century England, brash, shoddy, restless, anonymous, without style, petrol-fumy, car-choked”. But a dislike of uniformity cannot be general, since however undesirable a lack of diversity of choice may be in the things that matter – such as our jobs and activities, our tastes and home life and our environment – it is surely no bad thing that we can buy inexpensive but identical underwear, refrigerators, or cars. And in cars, the failure of the Ford Edsel in U.S. and the success of the Mini are welcome signs of a consumer revolt against over-arrogant advertising and marketing methods, and a determination by people to get what they really want.

The third thread, due to physical factors, is easily comprehended – the deterioration of the environment through noise, fumes, rubbish, etc. and the threat from pollution and industrial waste. The recent poisoning of the Rhine has highlighted this aspect, which has been suggested earlier in this article as the obvious starting point for enhancing life through technology. The scale of the problem is emphasized in a recent U.N. report quoted in *The Times* (24th June 1969) calling for concerted action to maintain a world fit to live in: “United States waste output alone included 142m. tons of smokes and fumes, 7m. discarded cars, 20m. tons of waste paper, 48,000m. tin cans, 26,000m. bottles and jars, 3,000m. tons of waste rock and mill

ailings, and 50,000,000m. gallons of hot water”.

There is another element in our disillusion with technology which seems almost too obvious to mention – the inextricable association of technology with destruction, death and war; with the hydrogen bomb and what Wilfred Owen calls “the stuttering rifles’ rapid rattle” and the monstrous anger of the guns”. But there have been wars before technology, and it can be argued that recent technology has made wars less profitable and less likely to occur. At any rate, let us concentrate on the more insidious threats of peace.

It is therefore proposed to run a series of articles in *T. to T.* written by technological experts, on the general theme of Mintech for Mantech – technology for man. The topics would include:

- How to get rid of old motor-cars.
- How to get rid of concrete.
- Hydrology, and coastal erosion; new islands in the sea?
- Urban renewal without complete re-development.
- Noise (a lot is known about how to stop noise, e.g. from jet aircraft).
- How wild life is coming back in forests and even towns.

But in addition to providing encouraging examples and specific data, a secondary object of the *T. to T.* series is to raise the questions we, the individual consumers, want the technologists to answer, rather than those the technologists choose to answer. Here are a few of mine – to do with people’s houses:

- How to keep noise out of a room (say with double glazing) without being suffocated through lack of air;
- How to enjoy a good old fashioned open coal or wood fire without polluting the air (in a smokeless zone);
- How to enable old people to live on upper floors in town centres (say above shops) – i.e. by cheap and simple lifts;
- How to adapt the interior spaces of a house to suit one’s needs over a long period of time and yet have reasonable privacy and noise control (i.e. open plan is NOT the answer, and I also do not accept that one should have to move house every two years whenever one’s household requirements change).

It is difficult at this stage to indicate the full range of topics that might be covered; and just because we have tended to start with the physical environment, it does not necessarily mean the exclusion of social, psychological or aesthetic matters, or questions of management and human engineering.

However we do not intend to tackle at all the immense topics of

Defence and Medicine, so readers hoping for information on do-it-yourself transplants will have to turn elsewhere. And we will not be bludgeoned by conventional economics and exclude proposals that are technically feasible but "uneconomic". Very few people profit from race riots, rootlessness and psychiatric disorders, and in the long term cyclic processes and a concern for human values make economic sense. And it has been estimated that if we salvaged 10 per cent. of our present waste products in Britain, we would have no balance of payments problem at all.

#### NOTES

- [1] *The Listener*, 5th June, 1969.
- [2] P. C. Bayley, "Where is Gloucester Now?", *The Listener*, 7th July, 1966.

# Religion and the Social Anthropology of Religion: IV Religious Sociology

*Dorothy Emmet*

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There are two topics which need to be distinguished, but which continually tend to slide into each other – the sociology of religion and religious sociology. The former aims at being an empirical account of how people's religious ideas and practices can be related to their social interests and the kind of societies they live in. In the last articles I have been concerned with methods and concepts used by sociologists and social anthropologists in doing this kind of study. Religious sociology, on the other hand, is an unashamedly normative exercise. It is an attempt to see what a society looks like in the light of certain religious ideas and ideals; it may be a critique of an existing society seen in this way, or a Utopia, describing a society which would fully exemplify them. The religious ideas and ideals need not of course be Christian ones, and the societies considered or imagined need not be the kind with which we are familiar. Also there can be different types of religious sociology, of which here are three:

(a) There is the kind of religious sociology which is written in the belief that religious principles support certain forms of social arrangements rather than others; for instance Christian sociologists in the early part of this century advocated pluralistic forms of society against the kind where there is increasing direction by a centralized sovereign state.

(b) There is the kind which assumes a liberal society in which forms of social and political life can be agreed on by men of good will, without claiming that they depend on any special religious considerations. The religious sociologist should support these forms, but also look to see that they provide opportunities for religious observances – not only for public worship, but also for places of quiet.

(c) There is the kind where a religious sociologist, while broadly accepting (b), also holds that some of these social forms and practices could have a religious dimension, from which additional insight might come. In this article, I shall be trying to write a piece of religious sociology of this third kind, doing it mainly through taking not particular institutional forms, but some of the sociological ideas which I have noted in the earlier articles, and seeing whether they could be so interpreted as to be used in a religious way of looking at society.

Since this will depend on a point of view, it might be said that to look at society in this way is simply to express an ideology. Certainly the point of view will be selective, controversial, depending on particular emphases, and containing a commitment. Some people may say this is just what they mean by an ideology. If there is a difference, it is that the kind of religious sociology I am trying to describe tries to make the point of view, with its emphases and commitment, explicit. An ideology I see as a complex of beliefs and attitudes, not only religious, which are implicit rather than critically examined; and generally, though not always, these are taken to be functions of social and economic interests [1]. The view of religion I am taking here is that which I tried to put in my first article: that religion is concerned with a way of living in response to creative and sustaining power in the inner life of the individual, and the effects of this on his social relations and on his outlook on the world beyond human society. This provides a specifically religious interest, and we see it as something which can interact with and affect people's social interests, and not only reflect them. It can be – undoubtedly is – also affected by them, especially in the forms taken by its symbols and rituals. We can allow this, while maintaining what I should call a “soft” as distinct from a “hard” relativism. A hard relativism would see the religious interest as a function of social interests, and its forms of expression in any society at any time as their expression in disguise. A soft relativism would see a two-way interaction between religious and social interests, so that in any society at any time the expression of social interests may be effected by religious ones as well as *vice versa*: neither can simply be reduced to the other.

I shall be writing about religious sociology from a “soft” relativist approach – that is to say, I shall be trying to see how this interaction between religious and social concerns can be used normatively. I mean by this that in such a religious sociology social relations and practices are criticized through religious ideas and ideals, and also religious ideas and ideals are criticized through what come to be thought good kinds of social relations and practices. Such a two-way movement in religious sociology will mean that the nature of a good society is not deduced *a priori* from religious ideas, since the religious ideas themselves will be shaped by the ways in which people see desirable social relations. But this is not a reduction, if the religious ideas have a three-fold reference: to the inner life of the individual, to his social relations and to his wider trans-social environment. If one thinks that the actual interest of religion consists in harmonizing social relations for the sake of social peace, or manipulating them for the sake of social power, then one is

clearly using a different philosophy of religion than if one thinks it is concerned with this three-fold reference. In the latter case, even in doing the sociology of religion one would be trying to see how these three factors might be affecting each other: how people's social relations are influenced by the forms of their inner life, and *vice versa*, and both of these by how they respond to their wider trans-social environment (and correspondingly how this may also be being interpreted through symbols of social relationships and of the inner life). This could be a richer, though also more difficult and controversial way of doing the sociology of religion than to confine it to a description of religious behaviour in social terms. It would still, however, be written in the third person as a descriptive account of how these mutual effects can be seen to work in particular times and settings.

A religious sociology, on the other hand, whether explicitly or not, is written in the first person. To make a critique, one must hold the normative point of view from which it is made. A religious sociologist will thus be seeing society in the light of religious ideas which he himself holds, or at least he will be making an effort to look at society religiously, and asking what difference is made by this way of seeing it. I shall now try to do this, realizing that anything I say will be from a personal and contestable point of view.

I shall take three sociological insights into society and ask how these might also be seen as religious insights with religious implications; the first is the notion of a society as a web of cross-cutting relationships; the second is that of the constructive use of conflict; the third is the relativism of religious ideas to social contexts.

Sociologists look for networks of mutually supporting functional relations, most of which are unintended and often unrecognized by the people whom they link. A religious sociologist cannot only look for the more obvious mutually supporting parts (quoting St. Paul on the members of the body, and invoking the organic analogies so beloved by Christian sociologists). We can learn to see a host of non-obvious ways in which people concerned with purposes of their own interact unwittingly in ways which support other people's purposes. (And correspondingly, they may interact unwittingly in ways which are mutually frustrating, or cause a deleterious process to escalate). The religious writer who, more than any other I know, saw this web of unintended mutually supporting functions as a religious fact was Charles Williams. He was sensitive to the ramification of "exchanges" by which what one person does contributes unknowns to other people, and similarly what they do contributes to him. We carry each

others' burdens, and we give them our's to carry, not only as deliberate attempts at mutual aid, but whether we like it or not, continually and in all manner of ways. To see this religiously is, first of all, to acknowledge it; our loves and affections then become part of this wider network: "one no longer merely loves an object; one has the sense of loving precisely from the great web in which the object and we are both combined" ("The Way of Exchange", in *The Image of the City and Other Essays*, by Charles Williams [O.U.P., 1958], p. 153). Not only our loves and affections: we are bound up too with our enemies, and to learn to accept this and not resent it may be a first step in learning to love them. "There is but one dichotomy: those who acknowledge that they live from the life of others, including their enemies, and those who do not" (*ibid.* p. 113).

"Including their enemies". We may depend on them whether we like it or not. We may resent this; we may even resent our dependence on our friends, feeling that it would be more dignified to be self-sufficient. To accept the ramifications of unintended mutual support as well as of deliberate services rendered, is to learn the lesson of our involvement in humanity. It may be harder for our pride to stomach the fact that we give other people burdens to carry than it is to offer to carry burdens for them; the latter can indeed produce a pleasant feeling of superiority. This goes also for our links with our enemies.

This leads to another sociological insight which can be seen religiously – how conflicts themselves can have constructive uses. Hegel may indeed be said to have written a whole metaphysics out of this insight; deliberately so, since it is clear from his early writings that he turned from theologian into metaphysician through reflection on the notions of conflict and reconciliation which had impressed him in Christianity [2]. The possibility in the constructive use of conflict comes out in some of the recent discussions by Max Gluckman and Victor Turner to which I referred in my second article. But I question whether anthropologists, in their accounts of the possibly strengthening as well as destructive role of social conflict, make enough of the importance of the attitudes of mind which may produce the former rather than the latter effect. This may be because an "attitude of mind" is a psychological and not a sociological notion; we are now, I think, moving away from the stage when it seemed necessary to keep psychological notions out of sociology. Gluckman indeed speaks of conflicts as having cathartic and cohesive effects where there is an underlying will to maintain the social institution under attack rather than disrupt it – rebels can thus be distinguished from revolutionaries [3]. I do not find, however, that he writes about the

positive will to restore a relationship after its strains have been exposed. He writes about Rituals of Rebellion, but not about Rituals of Reconciliation. Victor Turner is more concerned with this, as I tried to show in my second article, and in discussing his views I made a distinction between Palliative Rituals and Rituals of Reconciliation. The latter will be more than a “mechanism” for restoring a disturbed *status quo* before the conflict. It can be a means of better self-knowledge and of finding a fresh start.

To see mutual dependence within society with a religious interest would be to see it as a way of realistically filling in the picture of who is our neighbour. It will help us to see conflicts and tensions as to be expected and “Rituals of Rebellion” as incidents to be understood rather than nuisances to be resented. It will encourage us to look for means of understanding these conflicts and our part in them in order to strengthen a renewed relationship rather than just to restore the *status quo ante*.

Besides the web of relationships and the uses of conflict, there is the sociological interest of looking for unintended consequences of actions and policies. A sociologist trains himself to see activities and institutions as acting and reacting on each other in systems of multiple relations. Instead of just tracing single strand processes of cause and effect (which might seem easier to plan and control) he will look for repercussions of what is being done in one context for one reason on what is being done in other contexts for other reasons. To look at the problem of unintended consequences religiously might stimulate a concern for greater responsibility and foresight; a religious sociologist could share this concern with anyone of good will who is trying to use sociological resources to see how actions and policies are likely to turn out. Perhaps a more specifically religious interest would be in the increase in charity this could give, through struggling against “conspiratorial” ways of regarding our social troubles. If things go wrong it is immediately tempting to think that this is due to the machinations of some group of evil men – “they”, particularly the “they” whom we dislike for ideological reasons. If we see that no one may be directly to blame, but that we are all involved in narrowness of understanding and lack of foresight, we may not only be stimulated to think harder, but also to enlarge our charity.

Another sociological insight – or perhaps perspective – which can be taken up into a religious way of looking at society is its relativism. Practices and ideas are seen as related to their contexts, and making sense within a context, but not fitting every possible context, at any rate in the same form. This relativism is thought to be inimical to



religious views of society, which are supposed to deal in absolutes. In fact the contrary may be the case. If religion points to an absolute, it cannot be identified with any of the particular and partial images and practices through which we reach out towards it. That the latter are coloured by the thoughts and experiences and conditions of life of people in particular cultural contexts is too abundantly evidenced not to be accepted. What has been less obvious is that there can be a religious gain as well as loss in accepting it. The gain is in something which Reinhold Niebuhr has spent his life bringing home to us – that when people absolutize their own view point, whether in faith or morals, they will fall into the impiety of putting themselves in the place of God and into the cruelty of seeing their fellow men, who are involved in the same pretension, as devils [4]. To reach out to a perfection never adequately grasped can provide a way of criticizing our own formulation as well as those of our opponents. We can be alert to see how our own self-centredness and conditioning affects our views. We can come to see not so much a unique line of development in religious ideas and practices, not beholden to particular local conditions, as analogous lines and patterns in different settings, which we can come to appreciate as better and worse in their kind. Beyond this, and still without absolutizing any particular viewpoint, I should want to say that it is also possible to say that some “experiments in living” (the title of a well-known book on anthropology and ethics by Alec Macbeath) are more successful than others, both socially and religiously, and in these days of increasing cultural contact and change, when few people are going to be able to continue undisturbed in their own local ways, it may be important to have some criteria for these preferences.

One can ask whether the maintenance of a way of life depends on some element in the population being submerged, in the sense of being permanently excluded from rights and opportunities, as when a way of life depends on a basis of slave labour. One can ask whether a way of life contains resources for meeting the aspirations of such submerged elements when they see a chance of change, or whether it can only resort to repression. One can ask whether it can adapt itself to other kinds of change, or whether it just puts up defence mechanisms, such as witchcraft accusations, against anything new and strange. This last raises a crucial question, since one religious way of looking at society could be said to be just this. It could be a way of defending its institutions, explaining its misfortunes, and warding off threats, by appealing to certain supernatural beliefs. Professor Evans-Pritchard has shown in his classical study *Witchcraft Oracles and Magic among the*

*Azande* (Oxford, 1937) how witchcraft accusations can have a certain protective social effect, since they will be levelled at people in competitive relations who can be considered to be potential enemies of the sufferer of misfortune. They therefore serve as a warning to watch one's step, and not to go in for conduct that may incur such accusations. But to maintain a way of life by such aids must be, to say the least, extremely time-consuming. On a less prosaic level, we can say that it must entail a large amount of mutual distrust, fear and suspicion, while qualities which make for mutual trust will make possible a wider range of co-operative enterprise. This distinction can be one of the criteria of better and worse ways of life, and it can also answer to a distinction not so much between a religious and a non-religious way of looking at a society, as between two religious ways. For, as I have said, a defence mechanism such as a witchcraft accusation can be one of the religious sanctions of a society, as can also the fears attached to the breaking of taboo.

This view of religion as providing a defence mechanism goes with what Bergson, Popper, and others after him, have called the "closed society" and the "closed religion". The other religious view goes with what they have called the "open society" and the "open religion". A religion can become associated with an outgoing sense for humanity beyond any particular group, and with an aspiration after truth beyond any particular formulation. Bergson calls this outgoing attitude of mind "mysticism", using the word in almost the opposite sense from the anthropologists who use it to describe the invoking of untestable supernatural sanctions in a closed society. Clearly the outgoing attitude of mind can be associated with science, and science can thus break up the taboos of closed societies and closed religion. But similarly science itself can produce a closed group operating with closed concepts. (See Margaret Masterman's discussion of the view of T. S. Kuhn on this, in her "Theism as a Scientific Hypothesis", IV, *Theoria to Theory*, Vol. I, no. 4.) This can then be challenged through the attitude of mind of the "open" kind of religion, and this is why an open-ended humanism and an open-ended religion can join forces against the closed types of both.

A religious view of a society can thus be disturbing as well as a conservative. Indeed it may even be the case that if a religion is simply concerned with maintaining the coherence of a given set of social institutions and their *mores*, it may not even succeed in making them cohere. There may have to be something in the religious view which, by reaching out to a trans-social loyalty, can provide a criticism for existing institutions and *mores*, and without this they become too rigid even to survive. They may of course go down fighting, with all the

fanatical courage of closed religion, in an embattled cul-de-sac, but they will not be able to meet the crisis of fresh cultural impacts and changes. Moreover, few societies are simply one homogeneous group with homogeneous moral norms. We need not be Marxists to think that legal and educational means of trying to impress the moral norms of the dominant sections of society will look like impositions to the members of its sub-groups. A religion which had as its aim the maintenance of the dominant *mores* would be encouraging its dominant group to see themselves as the forces of light against the forces of darkness — a false absolutizing of a limited point of view, which would produce conflict and alienation among those who did not share it. Thus for a religion to be used as a means of social cohesion might even accentuate conflict with sub-groups. It could call out protests which could have a religious quality since they would be alive to the false absolutizing of a closed religion. The distinction of open and closed is however a matter of more or less. All religions are to some degree tribal religions, in a sense in which a close-knit sect is also a kind of tribe. The difference lies in whether the religion is largely a symbolic projection of social loyalties (though I do not think it can ever be only this) or whether the social loyalties are subjected to religious criticism. In the former case the religion will become political; in the latter it can be a means of self-criticism for all political groups including the political groups of protest.

A test case would be the view of religion in Harvey Cox's book *The Secular City* (Macmillan, New York, 1965; Pelican Books, 1968). This contains some good sociological writing about great cities. But in effect it is a political reduction of religion, not as symbolizing tribal loyalties (to do this he says, is to religify politics through the primitive notion of a "sacral society"), but by turning religion into social and political involvement, Cox is producing a more sociologically sophisticated version of the "Social Gospel" of the 1920's, when Christianity was seen as a concern for social justice within the institutions of a liberal democratic society. The Kingdom of Heaven was to be built on earth. In the 1930's we saw a reversion away from this. Theologians took to an anti-liberal "Biblical Theology", and if they concerned themselves with politics they tended to do so by combining their Biblical Theology with "social realism", either in a Marxist form or as the tough-minded anti-moralistic approach of Reinhold Niebuhr. Harvey Cox has been a Biblical theologian in his time, and his theology of the *Secular City* still has this background. But the theology turns into pragmatic social action. God is hidden, but works in history, and we serve him by historical action; not by "religion", but by involvement in the political

and social life of our time. The political and social life of our time predominantly takes the form of the politics of big cities, and big cities – New York, Chicago, London – are the contemporary form of the New Jerusalem, as giving the pattern of our common life and the symbols of what should be our view of the world. Cox writes ecstatically about the cultural achievement of the great city as the present culmination of God's hidden activity. Indeed another contemporary American theologian, Gibson Winter, whom he quotes with approval, has written a book with the title *The New Creation as Metropolis*. One cannot help thinking with a groan of our sprawling conurbations (and to do him justice, Cox does not want them just to sprawl, but to see and conduct themselves as great cities). It is this kind of writing among radical theologians that called out a vigorous protest from Thomas Merton in his article "The Death of God and the End of History" in *Theoria to Theory*, Vol. II, no. 1. "The comfortable 'secular city' theorists in America seem to be confessing the praise of an affluent world that does not need in any significant way to be changed" (p. 8). Their failure to produce a point for social criticism beyond social action may, he thinks, end in absolutizing the American way of life. This may sound surprising to English readers who think of radical theologians as also likely to be social radicals. But Thomas Merton's point is that their radicalism loses any religious vision of life beyond politics and social action by which these may be judged. In reading Harvey Cox's *The Secular City* I get an impression of the Biblical Theology as still there because it has been so important a part of Cox's own background. But the use of Biblical quotations in connection with his sociological points seems fortuitous, both as support for these points and as pieces of Biblical exegesis. I wonder whether another generation, who may not have his background of Biblical Theology, will not be likely just to take the sociology without the theology, so that we get a thoroughgoing reduction of religion to politics. Harvey Cox does indeed say in his reply to critics in *The Secular City Debate* [5], that he is now going to give more attention to specifically religious practices, instead of dismissing them as atavistic irrelevances, but he will do so in order to see "what elements can be used in the interests of humanization and social change" (p. 183).

Harvey Cox's "Secular City" is a latter-day version of what has been one of the most powerful of religious images – that of the City. But to Cox the City is not an image of religious reality; it is its own secular self. He does not see the traffic of Jacob's ladder pitched between Heaven and Charing Cross: he sees Charing Cross, and he likes what he sees. Yet it is refreshing to find a Christian writer who actually *likes* the

great cities and defends the value of the impersonal as well as the personal quality in the life which they provide. Christian sociologists, when they have not fallen for the virtues of an "organic" (i.e. basically tribal, if not patriarchal) way of life, have written as though human relations should all be "I – Thou" relations. This is so unrealistic that attempts to apply it in community life lead to a combination of "belongingness" (where people try to be altogether too much in each other's hair) with attempts to withdraw from contacts altogether. It does not give a proper place to what Cox calls the "I – You" relation, the friendly and mutual helpful, but not deeply involved, relation that a host of people can have with one another in the day to day transactions of a great city – or indeed in modern life generally. These do not take the place of genuine "I – Thou" involvement with a limited number of people; nor are they just ways of regarding people in an external mechanical way as "things". They can indeed be seen as parts of the great web of mutually supporting functional relations which itself can be seen as a social fact with religious implications. Harvey Cox is very good on all this; nevertheless I think he fails to show why the Heavenly City cannot in fact be approximated to London or New York. (Nor can I see Jesus Christ, as he appears to do on p. 188 of the Pelican Books edition of *The Secular City*, as the first Organization Man). He does not therefore show us why the image of the City has been such a potent religious symbol.

I turn therefore to some of the writings in which this image has been used with power, beginning perhaps inevitably with Plato. I do not believe (*pace* Sir Karl Popper) that Plato's *Republic* was intended as a tract for the reform of Greek politics on reactionary lines. I believe that it is first and foremost concerned with the religious theme of man's inner life in its bearing on his social relations and his trans-social aspirations. The just city is the model of the soul of the just man – not the other way round. The first point that I take from Plato's *Republic*, read as a religious critique of politics, is that one should not trust a politician who was purely a politician. It may be overstating the case to say, as Plato does, that no one should hold office willingly, since here, as in other things, one probably does a job better if one enjoys it. But the politician should know in his bones that politics is not the whole of life; indeed that there is "a life better than politics", and he must be able to turn contemplatively to this in whatever form it may take for him: doing philosophy and mathematics (as Plato would have him), or going on a religious retreat, or painting pictures, or all of these. Secondly, though perhaps connected, is the notion of man's double citizenship, in the city of his birth or adoption, and in a more universal

city, however conceived; the commonwealth of humanity, “the city laid up in heaven” (*Republic IX*, 592b.), the City of God.

“The City of God” – *Civitas Dei*: this, rather than “the Republic”, or even “the New Jerusalem” is the name under which the image of the City has taken root in our tradition, and this no doubt is due above all to St. Augustine. I read St. Augustine’s *City of God* in Healey’s Elizabethan translation early in September 1939, while sitting in a first aid post in the University of Manchester waiting for the air raids which, at that stage of the phoney war, failed to come. I do not know how far this great epic of “that most glorious society and celestial city of God’s faithful which is partly seated in the course of these declining times” depends on the doctrines of predestination, irresistible grace, and the punishment of the whole human race, except the small number of the elect, for Adam’s first sin. Indeed, Calvinists apart, the Church has never quite accepted this fierce logic. What we can take from Augustine is the gulf between two loves, and yet their continual mutual involvement in politics; self-love in contempt of God, which defines the earthly city, and love of God in contempt of self which defines the heavenly city.

A book by Karl Loewenstein, *Political Power and the Governmental Process* [6], opens with the remark that “the basic urges that dominate man’s life in society . . . are threefold; love, faith and power”, and he continues, “politics is nothing else but the struggle for power”. Augustine knew better; he knew that politics is too much a part of life to be so narrowly limited. Love and faith come into it as well as power. He knew that any society will have common loyalties and good things which are loved and prized. His famous saying “If justice be removed, what are kingdoms save great robber bands?” goes on “since even robber bands, what are they but little kingdoms?”. Even robber bands are kingdoms of a sort with a common bond (the Great Train Robbery showed us this). The discussion continues by saying how a piratical region (*magne latrocinium* – “flat thievery”, Healey translates it) can achieve *de facto* political sovereignty. So the view of what constitutes an earthly state is positivist (“Austinian”, one might say in another sense). Yet the earthly society is haunted by the longing for peace: “peace of man with man”, “peace of a family”, “peace of a city”, and finally the “peace of the city of God”. Justice and peace in the earthly society are always rough justice and precarious peace, but they are not to be despised. The citizens of the city of God should be prepared to bear office in the city of the world. St. Augustine, the Platonist, is not a believer in total depravity. He sees the fitful peace and relative justice in the world as a reflection of the order which is Heaven’s first law. They

are never perfect, never final, but they are infinitely better than anarchy. Political life needs to be continually sustained by institutions seeking to uphold peace; and it is sustained by men moved by faith and love as well as by fear, and by a desire for peace continually torn by the conflicting desire for power. Hence existing institutions can never be identified with the City of God. It is an illusion to think that the former can be so arranged that they will be completely harmonious so that no tension need arise, and "alienation" could be entirely eliminated. I take from St. Augustine's vision of the City of God that we must always be prepared to carry a certain amount of alienation. The conditions – indeed the vitality – of actual human social life – are such that we can never expect to feel completely at home in the institutions of the earthly city.

If it were otherwise, we might come to identify the City of God with some particular local social order – it may now be the "secular city", as in the past it was the fixed order of a sacred *imperium*. Byzantium in its time was looked on as the icon of the heavenly city (cf. Margaret Masterman, "Theism as a Scientific Hypothesis" III, *Theoria to Theory*, Vol. I, no. 3, p. 249). A Byzantine basilica is constructed as an image of the harmony and hierarchy of the cosmos, the worshippers on the floor seeing themselves as part of a total order, centring in the figure of the Christus Pantocrator in the dome, and descending through the heavenly hierarchies, the saints, and the figures of the Emperor and Empress, sometimes more than life size, sometimes dwarfed before a Christ to whom they present a model of their city. In either case, they are a part of the total hierarchy.

The architecture of the Basilica as well as its paintings and mosaics produced an icon of the world seen as a vast social order of heaven and earth, based on hierarchy and harmony. It was the world of "degree" in which everyone had his proper place. It did indeed unite the inner life of the worshipper on the floor of the Basilica with his social order, and showed his social order transfigured as part of a heavenly and cosmic environment, and thus it carried the threefold reference to the inner life, the life of society, and trans-social realities which a religious symbol needs if it is to have power. But it is the model which C. S. Lewis has called "The Discarded Image" [7], for it has foundered on the notion of a fixed social hierarchy no less than on the notion of a scale of fixed natural species. We can no longer look for fixed hierarchies where we have an evolutionary natural world of mutating species; nor can we look for a fixed social order, whether on a hierarchical or an "organic" plan, where we have cultural contact and a social mobility. Most of the religious sociology of the past, at any rate

**within the Christian tradition, has been written in terms of these kinds of relationship. The hierarchical model has foundered with the notion of the sacred *imperium*; the organic one has fixed social relations too much in terms of a single set of interconnected functions. In an organism there is indeed mutual support through differentiation of functions in a common life, and there is an overall growth towards maturity; but then there is senescence and decay. The organic model does not allow for mobility and the discovery of new ways of working; nor does it allow for solitude and private life.**

Here the image of the City may serve us better. The City is something constructed, it is not just a natural growth. It allows for choice of occupation, of friends, of cultural interests. It is an open society in a way that a tribe and even a village is not. It may be within a particular nation, indeed its capital, but it has a door open to people from many other places. Thus "the City" can provide an image which is not just the reflection of the social relations of a single ethnic group. Indeed the Heavenly City is seen as a place into which all nations of the world will bring their treasures. Thus, as a religious image, "the City" both shows inner realities through a particular social form, and also shows a social form through these realities. The image of the City is never just a realistic reflection of some earthly city; even architecturally it may have peculiarities which were never in any piece of town planning; its solidity is expressed, for instance, by its being four square (*Roma quadrata*, but far more so) and sometimes, impossibly, by its being a perfect cube, as high as it is broad and long.

To see a society with religious vision is thus not the same as to see it with a sense of moral responsibility. It is to see it through a transfiguring icon of itself, which indicates qualities for which we should look in a religious judgment on an actual society.

The religious judgment can of course be that of the "closed" or "open" form. In the former case a society will be seen as maintaining or failing to maintain supernaturally sanctioned principles. This goes not only for tribal societies; it is in effect the view expressed in Eliot's *The Idea of a Christian Society*. He does indeed look to a universal church for principles to be applied in his national church-cum-state, but these are to be applied in a way which would make them the principles of a closed religion. "The religious life of the people would be largely a matter of behaviour and conformity; social customs would take on religious sanctions; they would no doubt be many irrelevant accretion and local emphases and observances – which, if they went too far in eccentricity or superstition, it would be the business of the Church to correct, but which otherwise could make for social tenacity and



coherence" (p. 34). For "a positive culture must have a positive set of values, and the dissentients must remain marginal, tending to make only marginal contributions" (p. 46). (One wonders what sort of a "must" this is: a logical "must" defining a "positive culture"; or a recommendation that religious sanctions with secular force behind them should see that dissentients remained marginal.)

An "open" religion would be one not thus tied and reinforceable, but which could infuse religious qualities into an "open" society, and this will be likely nowadays to be mainly a secular society. The question will be whether these religious qualities can be infused without the society becoming atavistic, or the religion becoming a political tool. I shall now name some of these qualities; they will go along with arrangements which might also be seen by men of good will to be desirable and sensible arrangements, and they will be the religious aspect of these same arrangements.

Such a society will not be a hierarchy, or even an organic system of mutual functions. It will provide conditions and support for people to do their best work in a community of callings. The religious quality is shown by caring that people should live from an inner root and not only in terms of their social relations. Many of these relations will perforce be functional and impersonal; it is unrealistic to think otherwise, and this impersonality need not be the callous horror imagined by some Christian sociologists. But the web of functional relationships will be seen as made up of people needing also their own privacy, and (some more than others) solitariness, if they are to find their proper ways of working, thinking and responding. This may call for the provision of scope for groups with particular vocations within the wider society. It will mean that people will not be pushed around or left out; which is why no society, seen in the light of open religion, can acquiesce in having a permanently submerged element.

The demand that everyone should count is currently being translated into the demand that everyone should participate. How does this look, if we try to see it both religiously and sociologically as religious sociologists? If it means that all members of a society should share its main decisions through a public mass assembly, this, seen sociologically, is likely to have the opposite effect to making people count, since it is a method which lends itself to manipulation by a few clever politicians. Seen religiously, the perpetual sessions which would be needed for running any large and complex society would make it impossible for people to get the inner quiet and space to find their own vocations and do their best work. A Rousseauistic democracy of popular participation can indeed be a religious ideal, but the institutional forms it may take

need to be looked at realistically with an eye for unintended consequences. A democratic society, seen religiously, need not be one in which everyone claims the right to have a finger in every pie. Rather, it can be one in which people are prepared to trust one another in areas of genuine responsibility. It will of course need channels of communication so that it is possible to find out what is going on – indeed willingness to communicate may go along with trusting and being trusted. There will need to be ways of challenging, and at times getting rid of its official representatives, of protesting against what Walt Whitman called “the never-ending audacity of elected persons”, but they will not always be being interfered with.

The right to participate will be balanced by the right not to participate. There will be muckers in with political life, and also muckers out of it; and, seen religiously, the contribution of the latter will be respected; not only tolerated, but welcomed as maintaining an environment in which political animals can be sustained through contemplative quiet and imaginative life and the vitality which should come from these, and can at times turn to “the life better than politics” (the Platonic insight).

There is also the Augustinian insight. However deeply members of a society may be involved in its conflicts, they will not be seen as total conflicts between light and darkness; there will be a reference beyond them to a common need, a common penitence, and a common hope.

#### NOTES

[1] I tried to bring out the significance of the presence or absence of critical development in an article “World Views and Ideologies” in *The Cambridge Journal*, Vol. II, No. 8 (May 1949).

[2] See *Early Theological Writings*, edited by T. M. Knox and R. Kroner (Chicago 1948).

[3] *Rituals of Rebellion in South East Asia*. Frazer Lecture 1952, Manchester University Press.

[4] See, for instance, *An Interpretation of Christian Ethics*, p. 237 (Harpers, New York and London, 1935).

[5] Edited by Daniel Callahan. Macmillan & Co., New York, and Collier-Macmillan Ltd., London. 1966.

[6] Chicago, 1957.

[7] *The Discarded Image: an introduction to mediaeval and renaissance literature* (Cambridge, 1964).

# Facts or Fabrications?

*Bernard Wignall*

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Some things are alleged to happen and are attested in various ways, but they are not assimilated or assimilable at present by science. How should these be dealt with?

There are two extreme lines: (i) Theories are produced indefinitely flexible to cover these alleged facts. But they are not open to checking, they don't produce verifiable predictions, and those who put them forward are not able to submit them to radical criticism. (ii) The second extreme is the dogmatism of some of those who pursue successful and respectable branches of science – Whitehead has remarked that the obscurantists of any period are the practitioners of the successful methodology. Their dogmatism is not that they work with an available method to secure results, which may be admirable, but that they are unwilling to look beyond it at awkward facts and to evolve methods to cope with them – genuine methods, that is to say, that do not have the vagueness of extreme (i).

One problem is the size of the gap between the alleged facts as described and any usable form in which they would be amenable to some kind of controlled investigation, so that a next step can be taken in dealing with them scientifically. And here we come up against the difficulty that much of the evidence comes in anecdotal form. Science at the moment seems incapable of dealing with anecdotal evidence.

Anecdotal evidence can arise in two main ways, the first being when the events are infrequent and scattered enough to make waiting for them an unrewarding business – especially if the very existence of the events is doubtful. No one wants to spend his time trying to get measurements of something which may not even be there. So investigators fall back on anecdotal evidence, where there is a great temptation to dismiss the witnesses as unreliable – the more so as very often they *are* unreliable, and it is almost impossible to get quantitative results. The other way is where the evidence is the only information that can be available in principle; an example would be *déjà vu* which is always subjective.

My own particular interest is in Unidentified Flying Objects (see article in *Theoria to Theory*, Vol. III, October 1968). The reports of these phenomena have generally the first of our difficulties: the phenomena are infrequent and you don't know when they are coming.

Scientists when considering U.F.O's try to put all the emphasis on collaborative evidence such as photographs and radar, the idea being that people's accounts of what they have seen are distorted. But in fact this kind of equipment is unlikely to be on the spot. The simplest thing is to assume people have given a distorted account of a natural object and made it sound unusual, and that this can go for a large number of people as well.

As an example of a large number of witnesses to an unusual event we have the Fatima "miracle" on 13th October 1917, when 70,000 people saw an event predicted by three children (one of whom is still living) who had been meeting a woman on the thirteenth of each of the last five months. The woman was seen from a distance by other witnesses and was said to come from the sky in a sphere of light. The promised miracle was a bright disc which moved above the crowd before appearing to fall towards the earth, recover and fly away. Accounts of it have been given by many people, including scientists and the atheistic editor of a local socialist newspaper. Fatima then moved into the hands of the Catholic Church, the woman seen by the children being identified as the Blessed Virgin and the miracle being authenticated. So it seems to have moved out of the field of scientific investigation. We are left with the sceptics saying "mass hysteria" and the believers "a miracle", and no profitable suggestions as to what may have happened.

The only way of dealing with anecdotal evidence scientifically is thought to be by reducing the reports of witnesses to a bare minimum in which they could hardly be wrong. But then you may have left out so much information that what is left is not interesting. Some problems, however, can be solved by using this method and it can prove powerful. In an article on "The Natural Philosophy of Flying Saucers" (*Physics Bulletin*, July 1968) Dr. R. V. Jones gives an example supplied by the American solid state physicist Charles Kittel. "He and a British theoretical physicist were given the problem of establishing the pattern on which the Germans laid their mines at sea, the principal evidence being derived from the reports of minesweeper crews regarding the range and bearing of the mines as they were exploded by the passage of minesweepers. Kittel proposed to go on a minesweeping sortie to get the feel of the evidence. His British counterpart refused to go, on the grounds that since they would only be making one trip the evidence they were likely to get would be highly special to that particular trip and might colour their general judgement. Kittel at once found out the surprising fact that the reports of the crews were completely unreliable as regards range and bearing estimation, and that the only part of the

evidence on which he could rely was whether the explosion had occurred to port or starboard. I believe that he managed to solve the problem of the pattern on this evidence alone, but that his colleague remained perplexed until the end of the war through accepting the ranges and bearings as accurate”.

In this article Dr. Jones deals with U.F.O. reports and expresses the belief that there is no one consistent feature in them. He comes to a cautious decision on the assumption that “they were either a fantasy or an incorrect identification of a rare and unrecognized phenomenon”; and, he says, “while I commend any genuine search for new phenomena, little short of a tangible relic would dispel my scepticism of flying saucers”. The Condon Committee Report, made by the University of Colorado under contract to the U.S.A. Government and now obtainable in Bantam Books (1968), shows at least two instances where no conventional explanation is satisfactory. However the conclusion of the Condon Committee is that the study of U.F.O.s should cease as being of no value to science. Surely even two cases of something you can’t explain ought to make you want to go on investigating. But there is a strong scientific fashion which encourages you to concentrate on problems you think can be solved (cf. Medawar’s book, *The Art of the Soluble*), and this can make you act as though those that you can’t solve don’t exist.

We have been taking research on U.F.O.s as an example of a field where the evidence is almost entirely anecdotal. Another set of problems are of a kind that come up within a controlled situation and produce something unexpected which might in principle be repeatable, but which could entail an unwelcome re-alignment of our normally accepted views. For instance, there is a report of regression under hypnosis given by Dr. Jonathan Rodney in his book *Explorations of a Hypnotist* (Elek Books, 14 Great James’ St., W.C.1, 1959). Dr. Rodney was investigating regression of subjects under hypnosis, and with one of his more receptive subjects took her back before her birth, and kept going back until suddenly she started to speak in French. She said she was a Marielle Pacasse, a 25 year old, who worked in a shop in La Rue de St. Pierre. She used to attend Mass on Sundays at Notre Dame. She said it was 1794. The name Marielle Pacasse according to a French journalist, M. Jean-Claude Rivière, was “historic” and has fallen out of use. He also discovered that there is no Rue de St. Pierre today but that at the time of the Revolution a Rue de St. Pierre aux Boeufs existed on the Ile de Cité close to Notre Dame. The woman also gave several details of events at the time which were consistent with the records. She claimed she never went to secondary school, had never learnt

**French, had never been to France, and had never read a book on the French Revolution.**

**We are forced back on to various possibilities: (i) Fraud (quoting perhaps the breaking of Miss Jourdain's Versailles story). But before saying "fraud" it is well to be warned from Thomas Jefferson's remark, "I could more easily believe that two Yankee professors would lie than that stones would fall from heaven". Ten years later meteorites were accepted as having come from space. (ii) Or it may be said that the woman had in fact read or been read a forgotten novel. In this case further evidence should be forthcoming – the woman might even be asked about it under hypnosis. (iii) Some extra-sensory theory might be called in.**

**I have been giving some examples of alleged facts with which the scientists are wary of dealing. The temptation for those (including scientists) who do think about them is to swing to one of the two extremes I mentioned at the beginning: either uncritical acceptance or uncritical scepticism. The difficulty in getting a constructive approach is largely the nature of the evidence, which is either anecdotal or subjective. We need more accurate ways of sifting this kind of evidence than we have at present. We also need to be open to new possibilities in interpretative ideas without falling into a way of thinking which can't make contact with science because it lacks the sort of discipline which looks for methods of control outside the personal attitudes of the investigator. Whatever line you take, internal discipline, in the sense of checks and controls, is essential if we are to get usable results and not just speculations.**

# The Underground Alternative

*Ruby Rae*

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The British Underground is not, in any hitherto accepted sense, a “revolutionary” movement. It is a movement by a section of young intellectuals, creative people, and generally intelligent social “misfits” who have deliberately rejected the habits, manners, customs, morals, politics, and life-styles of the established society – “international, inter-racial, equisexual” – with its own ideology and economic system. It is not clear whether they think they can do without organized institutions or whether they think they can turn them into something different. At present they are depending on this framework while rejecting it. Also with the emphasis on each individual “doing his own thing”, there are no clear all-embracing features encompassing all those who participate in the underground movement. It is perhaps possible to point to some mixture of its ingredients.

The underground activities are intensely concerned with something like religious faith. There seems to be a desperate craving for belief. The underground artists believe that the problem of modern life is essentially a spiritual problem. “Today there are full stomachs and hungry minds. And a hungry mind will not tolerate the same things as an empty stomach” [1]. The quest for expansion of consciousness has led the underground to Eastern religions, but most of the established religions like Hinduism have been rejected, as these are considered to be accomplices of the State in binding and blinding people rather than serving to liberate them. Rather, there is a great deal of identification with movements which were usually suppressed in whatever society they appeared in; for instance, “witchcraft” in Europe, or “Tantrism” in Bengal, or “Zen” in China. These practices were opposed to established civilization and “taught that man’s natural being is to be trusted and followed”. (Gary Synder). Zen is perhaps the most favoured. It stresses intuition, does not indulge in complicated metaphysics, avoids words as much as possible and encourages direct personal experience of reality. The preoccupation with “mystical visions” has led to experimentation with psychedelic drugs, mainly LSD. If one accepts the premise that psychedelic experience is mystical experience, then “Now the common man can share the mystical visions of the saints themselves, and it is no longer necessary to spend ten or twelve years in a Zen monastery to achieve true satori” [2].

Here is what Timothy Leary, the LSD enthusiast, who coined the famous slogan "Turn-on, Tune-in, Drop-out", said in his publication, *The Mile High Underground*: "If everyone in London were to 'Turn on' and 'Tune in' grass would grow on the Strand and tieless shoe-less divinities would dance down the car-less streets. (This will happen within 25 years. Deer will graze down Charing Cross Road.)" The Underground scene is noticeably unsure about tackling the economics which could give it a real separate existence. In order to erect the Alternative Society it acknowledges the need for independent economic organization but its ideal is to create a moneyless society, based on serving essential human needs. This can be brought about by gradually extricating from the money system. However, money is a necessary measure of exchange for the consumers in the society – especially as the underground life style includes such items as records and drugs. Although some advocate self-sufficient farming communes, most of the underground people are city dwellers for whom these rural outposts hold very little interest. Some provision is made, especially for the artists, to earn a bare minimum within the movement. Theatre groups, individual film makers, painters, poets, serious pop musicians, mime groups, light-show makers, have facilities to perform in all the 26 Arts Labs throughout the country where the audiences make small contributions towards the performances. Arts Labs are loosely structured institutions with artistic workshops (which turn into theatres at night), coffee bars, bookshops, and so on, serving some of the needs of the underground people. All Arts Labs normally send copies of their programmes round, announcing possible groups, productions and films available to go on circuit. These underground activities are different from the kind of cultural entertainment that is provided for the larger society. They aim for total involvement of their audience, striving to create situations where the audience become the performers and differentiation between the performers and the audience is irrelevant. There are constant experiments to break down the barriers between the artist and the audience. Here is an example of a "theatre of involvement" experiment made by "The People Show", a drama group which started at the London Arts Lab and then went to other underground centres. The Arts Lab was divided into four cages, made of springs and wires and each had a door. There was walking space around each cage and a wider area in the middle. The audience was admitted in groups of ten. They were led around the walking space and locked into the cages which had beer crates to sit on. A jazz group began to play music which resembled animal noises and each cage was lit up in turn, by a spot light. Then one of the cast had a verbal battle



with the TIM Telephone Operator (man versus machine battle) which was followed by a dialogue between the actors. The lights dimmed and the cast went around the cages making very sinister animal noises, scratching the bars of the cages with sticks. A further sketch followed with a long involved interrogation scene. The members of the cast and the audience were grilled about the whereabouts of a Mrs. Meadows, by a hysterical official, who also provided hundreds of photographs for examination. The whole scene grew more and more hysterical and dissolved into a blur of sound, light and shouting. Finally the lights went up, and the cages were unlocked. The show lasted about an hour.

The underground films go on circuit more frequently than any other production. A well-organized register of the films is kept in London and they are sent around for a very small charge. These films, which can be 5 minutes or 6 hours long, mainly deal with drug scenes or sexual fantasies. Often they are accompanied by pop music or Indian music on tape recorders. Some of the films are made to be shown on three or four screens simultaneously.

Some underground artists earn their living by writing or drawing for newspapers and magazines like *International Times*, *Oz*, or *The Rolling Stone*. Selling these provides living for some. Many take advantage of National Assistance, some work temporarily for small firms making gadgets for pop groups. Others take temporary jobs with the Post Office or on the buses, and a few are students living on their grants. Jobs with big Corporations, especially such as ICI, PYE, BBC or banks are very unpopular, especially with the artists. The Underground centres spread widely through Europe and America, where visiting artists are welcomed to perform and they are generally paid enough to get along for a while. For instance, Paulo arrived from Italy to show his underground films to the Cambridge Arts Lab and earned about £4. I had a conversation with him. He was telling me that in Italy some beautiful people became aware of another level of consciousness when some Americans passed through Rome on their visit to Europe, about 5 years ago. They showed some Stan Brackage, Kenneth Anger and other underground movies to a small audience. Paulo left his T.V. Producer's job, sold his house with a big garden and went to India where the "structures" in his head had a violent shaking. He said, "My head is still in confusion. I can't work *with* the 'society', 'structure' or 'system'. Che Guevara only resorted to Revolution at the right time as the correct tactics. He was not violent at heart. By arguing against, or being violent at, you may change the situation but not yourself. The Revolution must be within oneself. No violence against others/objects". He felt that the French Revolution did not change the people, as they

still held bourgeois attitudes. It did not change them, but only the situation – for the worse. “The people in the underground cinema still belong to the intellectual élite unlike the pop music which has even reached my mother. She likes the Beatles. It would be good to reach a big audience after some experimentation has been done. But it is impossible to show films in any big cinema anyway because of the monopolistic system”.

The underground movement is involved in making more and more provisions for the welfare of its people, as different needs arise. “Release” organization in London is mainly concerned with those on drug charges and has built up a very efficient system to deal with this very real problem. The “BIT” information service has a computer which stores all kinds of useful information and services available in urban centres, especially those concerned with accommodation, jobs, and sympathetic people. Also, most Arts Labs provide free food, clothes or sleeping space for those in need. There are sympathetic doctors, lawyers, and psychiatrists available, also the occasional friendly shop keeper, or person willing to provide a bed.

The police, the press and the parents showed violent hysteria at the spread of pot and LSD and the general existence of the underground activities. John Hopkins, a member of the editorial Board of *International Times* was imprisoned for 9 months on drug charges. The GLC put Alexandra Palace out of bounds although the “Technicolour Dream” held there and attended by 8,000 people was notably well conducted. Then there was the affair of B. Miles, the manager of Indica bookshop. In December 1966 he was nominated by the Arts Council to serve as a junior member of the literary advisory panel for a year. Three days later the invitation was withdrawn because Lord Goodman considered him unworthy of this task as his name was associated with *International Times*, a journal advocating “a permissive attitude towards drugs”. The police raids on *International Times* offices and Indica bookshop yielded no evidence for prosecution. Some underground artists – Jim Dines, Ed Sanders – were arrested for obscene works of art. UFO (entertainment centre) was forced to close down. UFO (Unidentified Flying Object) which started at the old Shamrock Club in Tottenham Court Road, was the scene of wild regular events in a rather festive and friendly atmosphere. J. Hopkins, known as Hoppy, Jack Moore and Jim Haynes (who have been involved in starting the *International Times* and London Arts Lab) introduced adventurous pop groups like the Pink Floyd, the Cream and the Crazy World of Arthur Brown, which were accompanied by Mark Boyle’s light shows. Light shows consist of a display of projected images and flashing

lights usually accompanying pop groups. The Incredible String Band which operates somewhere between folk and pop (considered by many to have reached the highest level in contemporary pop music) was also first introduced at UFO. A great number of inventive artists staged "happenings" there. For instance, The Exploding Galaxy, a dance-troupe, which experiments in almost every field of visual and verbal communication – ballet, kinetic drama, sculpture, paintings, poetry and films. They may dance bare-breasted to the sounds of bongos and flutes, wear garlands of flowers round their necks or small bells attached to bands round their ankles. David Medalla, originally from the Philippines, who is very much the inspiration behind the group obtained a diploma in Greek Drama and Philosophy at Columbia University at the age of 13. He has helped in the production of numerous underground films, and held several sculpture exhibitions. Also, there were continuous underground films and old silent comedies being shown at UFO. All this, together with fairly obvious drug taking in the audience, was created to provide an atmosphere in which young people could relax or create. When UFO was closed down, a similar scene was created at the "Middle Earth" in Covent Garden, but this was forced to close down as well.

Such blows were accepted as inevitable acts of persecution by the system and the older generation. As a result of police harassment and many stories about the police "plants", the "Release" organization was set up to help people on drug charges. After an initial burst of persecutions, there has been a comparative calm in the last 12 months or so.

Very possibly the authorities do not regard the underground as a serious threat. After all, if the "revolution" is taking place only in the minds of the young then there is no practical danger. George Harrison of the Beatles sings: "Try to realize it's all within yourself/no one else can make your change"! The underground is not concerned in making political protests, it only wants to make the minds of the young more "conscious".

Although the underground movement was started by middle class intellectuals, it is not a matter of social class but of dislocated groups. Most of the full-time participants have a background of social sciences, humanities, drama schools or art schools.

These disciplines arouse a presumption that it is human values that count rather than money values. The kind of expectancy they inject is found to be absent in the wider society. People from these backgrounds often come up against economic pressures. Too many of them chase the too few "interesting" jobs available. Also, on the whole, these jobs are

not well paid. Although the economic deprivation must play an important part towards causing frustration, I feel the non-achievement of expressive goals is more important. Even those who are employed find themselves out of step with the prevailing atmosphere around them. Very often scientists who desire creative expression also join the underground activities. The tendency towards giant corporations in the commercial world, the pyramid structure of the status hierarchy, along with specialization, tend to rob people of individual initiatives, expression and decisions. This situation in the commercial world is possibly a big factor making for the recruitment of creative people in the underground. Other conditions relevant to the contemporary Britain of the 1960's may possibly be the gradual decline in national prestige, especially since World War II, the loss of faith in the political parties, particularly by people who had hopes in the Labour party, and the loss of belief in Christianity. I feel that it would be misleading to look for psychological disorders in the personalities of the people in the movement. There are studies of millenarian movements which see them as mass fantasies followed by maladjusted people with paranoid leaders. But as E. P. Thompson [3] has suggested, "we must try to distinguish between the psychic energy stored – and released – in language however apocalyptic, and actual psychotic disorder." This Underground movement is made up of highly intelligent and sensitive people, living in the midst of an affluent society whose values they reject while nevertheless it provides props for their way of life. Probably many of them will go back into this society. Will the drop-outs then just drop into its slots again, or will they retain a spontaneity and vitality from their experience in the underground, which could make things never quite what they were before?

#### NOTES

- [1] D. Gregory, *International Times*, no. 4.
- [2] W. Braden, *The Private Sea LSD*, p. 91.
- [3] E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the Working Class*, p. 54.

# The Unpublished Works of Teilhard de Chardin: I

*Jerome Perliński*

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Although thirteen years have passed since the first publication of *The Phenomenon of Man*, there is yet, if not a large, an extremely important body of essays and letters of Teilhard de Chardin which have not reached the public eye. These date from as early as 1920, shortly after those works gathered in the volume *Writings in Time of War*, and cover the entire span of Teilhard's life until the final witness-summary, *Le Christique*, written in 1955. One may argue that the publication of the some fifteen to twenty volumes which have already appeared has been a difficult task, a task well accomplished in a short period of time. And the Paris-based Fondation Teilhard de Chardin promises that the final volumes in the *Oeuvres* will appear there by the end of 1969. There is merit to this argument. Considering the courage necessary to defy strong integralist church feeling in France and Rome of the middle 1950's, and, then, perhaps even a greater obstacle, the fluctuations in conservative-progressist alliances and thought trends throughout the period of Vatican Council II and extending even until now – these were (and in some ways continue to be) barriers to speedy, efficient, and total publication.

Nonetheless, one may perhaps criticize the direction of the Fondation Teilhard for a certain amount of pusillanimity and misdirection of the entire "movement". As we shall see in the following pages, many of the most important of the Teilhardian works have remained until last to see a public life. Some of these have been his most controversial writings. Indeed, the essays on original sin and the fall contributed to his Chinese exile; and "The Evolution of Chastity" continues to be the centre of misunderstanding and abuse, especially in France and Belgium. The rationale behind such late publication for these documents has been the need for a mature audience and the avoidance of direct confrontation with church authorities. However, it seems safe to say that the intellectual world of the late 'fifties and early 'sixties was certainly ready for the full sweep of the Teilhardian synthesis: witness the welcome that the *Phenomenon* received on all sides with scientists, humanists, and many religionists as well. Instead, this world was given a few morsels at a time – stretched over a rather

long period by contemporary standards, with the result that many lost interest. Objections to some of Teilhard's premises or conclusions were often thrust aside by those who had access to the full body of literature as irrelevant in the light of all the documents. This "I-know-more-than-you-do-but-I-can't-tell-you" attitude has often led to frustration for those who would know Teilhard more profoundly, and to a certain degree has led to a kind of disillusionment and stagnation in Teilhardian studies. In short, the Fondation Teilhard, in applying the principle that babies cannot be fed with meat before they are weaned on milk, misjudged the maturity of the world audience and has as a consequence lost it (or, at least, has failed to keep its powerful hold).

What is the content of these unpublished essays and letters? Do they add, substantiate, or clarify ideas and concepts which have already appeared in previous volumes? In some ways, the answer to the latter question can be negative, for, as has often been pointed out, Teilhard had a single theme, or a few variant themes, and his intellectual output had been nothing but the clarification of these same themes which appear over and over in his writings. In this sense, a reading of the *Phenomenon*, for example, or *Man's Place in Nature*, or *The Future of Man*, by an enlightened and perceptive reader, would touch on almost all of these themes. But there are few such readers, and even if there were, Teilhard's prose can be a literary adventure in itself.

The essays touched upon here do not include those documents which are privately held. For example, Mlle. Alice Teilhard-Chambon possesses an early journal which has been commented on by the Reverend Peter Schellenbaum in a thesis written for the theology faculty at Lyons. The Jesuit provincialate in Paris possesses some journal extracts and letters which, along with those letters in the hands of some of Teilhard's Jesuit friends, would also prove interesting to Teilhard scholars. It is doubtful whether the letters in the possession of members of the Teilhard family have much more than family and/or personal significance; while, on the other hand, the excerpts and commentaries which Teilhard made on his readings during the Second World War and after, provide some enlightening hints (as do the retreat notes) on the personal intellectual and spiritual reasons for Teilhard's synthesis. In any case, it will no doubt be a long time before any of these will be available to more than a select few. The documents treated here are those which are officially catalogued in the archives at the Fondation Teilhard, Paris – many of them to be published soon; some perhaps not for some time, especially letters with comments on living persons.

These documents seem to fall into six general classes: Progress, Man

and human socialization; Christ, evolution and the Christian life, pantheism and mysticism; two special questions: original sin and chastity; several general summaries; and finally the unpublished correspondence.

### *Progress and Man*

Five essays, either unpublished or published only in part, deal with the principal themes of the *Phenomenon*, *Man's Place in Nature*, and many of the concepts appearing in documents in Volumes II, V, and VI of the *Oeuvres*. The arguments will be familiar:

The key to science, to knowledge, and to understanding the universe as a whole is man. In "Sur le Progrès", written in 1921, Teilhard suggests that man is the best argument for a progressive view of history. Not only does the cosmos move and change essentially, as opposed to a static, fixist Aristotelian world, but it has a direction. This direction is toward life, or fuller consciousness. Therefore, Progress which is here clearly defined as "to be more" (*être plus*) is grounded upon human existence: "The world has certainly progressed because we exist".

Nevertheless, any theory is valueless unless it bears upon human action. In "Essai d'intégration de l'homme dans l'univers", a series of three conferences given to the Marcel Legaut group in November-December 1930, Teilhard explains his evolutionary ethical system, since more fully commented on by people like Aldous and Julian Huxley and Stephen Spender. (Some further ideas are given in "La Morale peut-elle se passer de soubassements métaphysiques avouées ou inavouées?" Peking, 23rd April 1945). The touchstone of morality is progress – whatever advances the universe along its path is good; abuse brings regression. Generally speaking, such a broad approach to morality can bring little disagreement. But criticism arises – and this has been a heated point of controversy for most of this century – when it is applied to the individual. Teilhard makes it clear in his second conference, however, that too great an emphasis on the individual will serve only to obfuscate the ethical dimension, let alone our more generalized view of progress, evolution and man's place within them.

Perhaps no single concept has received more round criticism and has been more often discarded than Teilhard's idea of the collective. The *Phenomenon* does not make it clear that he does not write off individuality and human autonomy as simply a dead-end on the axis of evolution. Here we find Teilhard making some much clearer statements. Individuals have a right to guard their own personal autonomy. But to abuse it is to lose it, and such an abuse can come from two directions: inertia or lack of effort and movement toward progress, and egotism:

“to believe that our entire destiny is to achieve ourselves”. Here we find a repetition in more human and personal terms of the idea of creative union which Teilhard expostulated early in his career (cf. “Creative Union” in *Writings in Time of War*).

The future belongs not simply to individuals, to humans, but to Humanity, the awareness of which, Teilhard thought, “surpasses all others in grandeur and profundity”. Such an awareness can help us see more clearly the fact of socialization, which he discusses in two short essays written in New York in 1951 and 1952 respectively: “On the Significance and Trend of Human Socialisation” and “On the Biological Meaning of Human Socialisation”. Here he makes clear again that the universe is of a piece, that all hangs together. Socialization then is not a by-product of human productivity, but a true prolongation of the biological thrust of the universe.

With the enforced leisure of the second world war years, Teilhard turned more and more toward the needs of socializing humanity. In the late 1940’s and early 1950’s, he spoke again and again of a New Anthropology whose “main line of interest should be to guide, to promote, and to operate the evolution of man”; “the science of Anthropogenesis, the science of the further development of man”. This concept was made a bit more specific in a short single page essay called “Le phénomène humain” prepared in June 1954. Here he called for a conjunction of sociometry (mathematical research on statistical regularities – now vastly extended through computer techniques) and sociodynamics, by which he meant the study of the energetic conditions for the possible prolongations of man in the direction of the ultra-human, i.e. Humanity.

Teilhard never made any claims that his views were absolute and finished. Rather they were “suggestions”, the value of which could be tested if, as he says in “Sur le Progrès”, they satisfied “our reasonable faith in life” or if, as suggested in the 1952 socialization essay, “they can provide us with new incentives and a new clarity”. Already then he was thinking and writing about planning whole civilizations – while the idea of simple planned communities was barely being discussed: “no workable world civilization can be planned unless we take into consideration and learn how to control the splitting and diverging effects of mutation and speciation at the very heart of human civilization”.

### *Christ and Christian Life*

Perhaps the greatest question for Teilhard, however, was not in working out the principles and outlines of a neo-humanism, but in



adjusting the old concepts of monotheistic christianity with the new scientific view of the world. It is certain that he always regarded this as his greatest contribution to the world of thought and it is to this effort that he devoted a very large part of his energies. The unpublished essays in this realm cover a span from 1933 (“Christologie et evolution”) to 1952 (“Ce que le monde attend en ce moment de l’Eglise de Dieu”) and become progressively more succinct and sure in tone.

For Teilhard, the essence of Christianity (in “Quelques vues générales sur l’essence du Christianisme”, 1939 and “Introduction à la vie chrétienne”, 1944) consists in its personalism: a supreme “I” united with human “I’s” through the christic “I”; or a belief in a hyper-personal God, a divine historic Christ and a church-phylum. Whichever way christianity is identified, however, its traditional conceptualizations, both about itself and about the world, are curiously and dangerously out of step with the demands of an evolutionary cosmos. Teilhard offers various attempts at bridging this chasm between the two worlds. In “Note sur la notion de la perfection chrétienne” (1942), he sees a separation between the natural perfection of the world and supernatural progress. Parellel to this is a false rivalry between individual and collective attempts at achievement. Here the solution is to be found in a super-imposition of the processes of natural progress and spiritualization; a change in attitude and perspective to be accompanied by the growing realization of creative union among human persons. This was in large part one of the great themes of the *Divine Milieu*: to be able fully to give itself, the world must fully be itself.

In a more mature article, “Introduction à la vie chrétienne”, Teilhard approaches the problem in another way. Which is the “true” religion? That which has the capacity to explain the universe around us. Only the religion which advances a “universal-Christ” as the ultimate convergent point to evolutionary progress can hope to capture the energies of the human spirit. An “expanded” Christ, occupying a position concomitant with the mysterious limitlessness of the universe itself, “renders Evolution possible”, while “Evolution renders Christ concrete and desirable”. This universal-Christ appearing as early as 1920 in the already published “Note sur le Christ-universal” (Volume IX) and insisted upon until the final “Le Christique” can inspire men with a veritable love for evolution which expresses the mystical orientation of contemporary man, driving him in the direction of the dynamic, the universalized, and the pantheized.

[to be continued]

# Reviews

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*Persons: A Study of Possible Moral Agents in the Universe*, by R. Puccetti. Macmillan, 50s.

At first sight "Persons" may seem something of a pot-pourri. Puccetti does not seem to know whether he is writing philosophy, popular science or future history. In fact, as I shall claim, all these elements meet in the book's essential nature, which is that of a religious tract.

The first chapter, "Human Persons", is a development and partial rejection of Strawsonian personalism. (See P. J. Strawson, *Individuals: An Essay in Descriptive Metaphysics*.) For Strawson the concept of a person is logically prior to those of body and mind. Persons are entities such that both consciousness-predicates and physical predicates are applicable to them. Puccetti argues that this characterization is both too broad and too narrow: too broad, because many consciousness-predicates are applicable to dogs; too narrow, because no physical predicates are applicable to God or to angels, who are therefore ruled out by definition. As a piece of descriptive metaphysics, therefore, Strawson's account will not do.

In fact, it seems unlikely that religious believers have ever thought of God, still less of angels, as persons in quite the usual sense. Nor is it clear that we do not regard some animal behaviour as personal, while still insisting that too few consciousness-predicates apply for any animal to count as a person. Wittgenstein's theory of family resemblance is perhaps relevant at this point. Puccetti, however, attempts a strict division of Strawson's P (Person)-predicates into C (Consciousness)-predicates, applicable to all conscious (possibly sentient is the more appropriate term) beings, and true P-predicates. Thus: An example of M (physical predicate) is "being in the drawing room"; of C, is "going for a walk"; of P, "believing in God".

Having thus narrowed Strawson's requirements on an intuitive basis, Puccetti argues that only P-predicates, indeed only some P-predicates, can apply to God. This reveals the dangers of intuition: of Puccetti's list, it is true, only a few P-predicates apply to God. But consider C "having desires". Certainly there is nothing in the Biblical picture which outlaws this. Puccetti might wish to say that God could only have personal desires: he allows, for example, a P-thing "feels a righteous anger". But as Buber has pointed out, nothing done or experienced by a man is quite what an animal would do or experience. As Aristotle observed long before, men are not alive in the same way that animals or

plants are alive. If Puccetti appeals to the personalness of some desires to solve the above crux, he cannot object to applying the principle throughout: in which case man has no C-predicates in common with dogs. If this line is rejected, Puccetti must admit that God also has some in common: e.g. "is living".

Puccetti now proceeds to isolate the hypothetical common characteristic of his P-predicates. He concludes that P-predicates have a distinctively intellectual and moral cast. His lists are tendentious: many C-predicates are ambiguous (not merely "is thinking", which Puccetti admits), one ("remembers that clearly") seems only dubiously C-worthy; conversely many P-predicates (and cf. "predicts rain soon" which could apply to a piece of sea-weed). As Puccetti explicates "moral and intellectual" this is to say that persons are uniquely capable of assimilating a conceptual scheme from their social environment. Persons are uniquely symbol-using entities. Puccetti seems to assume at this point that an entity's capacity to employ moral terms is a necessary and sufficient condition for our using moral terms about it. He later admits that, e.g. a dog could well be a moral object without being a moral subject. He might also have remembered the case of human psychopaths.

P-predicates, moreover, are held to imply C-predicates. A person could not be P in anguish if he could not be C in pain, and so throughout. This example, which Puccetti presses, is in fact very weak: mental anguish is neither physically nor conceptually dependent upon physical pain, and Puccetti offers no reason, save arbitrary fiat and an utterly inadequate analogy with colour-appreciation and colour-sensation, to show that it should be. The connection is rather that implied above: persons may be euphoric, and animals only happy, because euphoria is the personal way of being very happy: it does not presuppose that the entity could or should be animally happy. Puccetti's notion of C-predicates combining with P-predicates is a late and threadbare attempt to explicate this point. He concludes, in any case, that there might be an entity without C-predicates who could not have P-predicates, even if it said it did. Nothing could think green ugly without seeing green: nothing could be in anguish if unable to be in pain. Presumably those unfortunates who cannot feel pain are therefore unpersons. Despite the badness of this argument, and despite the fact that if it works at all it must apply to all  $P \rightarrow c$  predicates, Puccetti concludes that it is moral characteristics which are the sine qua non of personalness. Persons are entities which can take moral attitudes (what if they can only take some moral attitudes?).

Puccetti now turns to the problem posed by God. He argues that as

moral predicates presuppose sensation and sensation predicates presuppose the possession of a body, God must have a body: which is impossible. It is also totally invalid (as Aristotle could have told him). Let all moral predicates imply sensation, still only some sensations imply a body: so nothing follows. Even if all sensations imply a body, the syllogism is open to other, material, objections. Puccetti had *not* shown that moral predicates imply sensation, nor has he discussed what it is to have a body and in what sense this is implied by the having of sensations. Nothing very difficult for a believer, in any case, is implied by God's inability to have sybaritic tastes or feel euphoric.

Puccetti goes on to argue that on the contrary this is a difficulty. God can only be a moral judge if He knows what the sensations and emotions of persons are like, but being perfectly good He cannot experience those that are evil. Therefore He is in no position to judge. Puccetti considers the answer that God has direct access to all mental states, but concludes that this would be insufficient, as God must know that the experiences are not His: he does not experience them as *x* but rather as *A's x*. How then does He recognize them, still less presume to judge them? Either He has feelings of pain, hatred, lust (in which case He is not perfectly good) or He cannot judge them (in which case He is not the supreme judge). Puccetti adds that he does not regard this argument as conclusive: he is correct. Several things are wrong with it: no passion is itself evil, though it may be misplaced: in itself it is good and indeed divine. God does not indeed *suffer* such things, because He is the creator: but that is also to say that He recognizes our pains and passions, because He made them. No angel has the right to judge us, for he knows nothing of our temptations. God does, not merely because (on the Christian view) He endured them, but because He made us, and all our passions are in the image of the divine love. I hold this riposte conclusive no more, and no less, than Puccetti his original argument, but it is an immediately obvious and (I think) orthodox reply.

Puccetti now turns to consider first Strawson and then Hick (cf. John Hick, ed. *The Existence of God*, Macmillan) on immortality. Strawson accepts the possibility of disembodied expersons; their existence, or rather one's existence as such, is conceivable but boring. Puccetti thinks it interesting but unlikely. He points out that in the absence of a bodily causal system there is no particular reason to apprehend events from any particular point, nor even in a way continuous with the embodied or within the disembodied state. A totally subjective world of dream and memory seems most likely, and one's individuality would hardly endure very long under such circumstances. This is all very reasonable, though it amounts only to

saying that the laws of the afterlife are a matter for empirical discovery, and somewhat ignores the point that “disembodied” means only divested of our present three-dimensional body: once again, what precisely is a body?

Hick’s explication of the resurrection consists of positing a resurrection world where the departed live in bodies basically similar to their old, allowing for continuity of sensation. Puccetti argues that as this world cannot be in our universe, there can be no contact between the departed and ourselves. There appear to be two facets to his argument: (i) there can be no direct verification of the thesis in this world; (ii) the dead and living can have no moral relations with each other, and therefore cannot exist as full persons for each other. He does admit the possibility of an indirect relation (“Uncle John won’t like that when you cross the Jordan and have to tell him”), but ignores the fact that they are all persons for God. His argument is a doubtfully licit attempt to define persons in terms of personal relationships: one consequence is presumably that historical figures are not to count as persons. Amongst other terms which require fuller explication are “world”, “can” and “relationship”. I am unable to detect any point in this argument.

Puccetti concludes that there is no conceptual difficulty in the notion of a non-human person, that is to a moral agent who is not (biologically) a man. This is indeed both true and obvious: C. S. Lewis coined the term “hnau” to cover the class of human and non-human persons. It is, however, a point worth discussing: it seems unlikely that we shall meet any non-human persons for some time, but it is as well to be prepared.

Chapter Two, “Person Artifacts”, deals with robots and androids (to employ current science fiction jargon). Puccetti begins by asking whether (as inanimate things) machines could be said to think: that is “whether the paradigm sentence ‘This machine is thinking’ could acquire a standard English use in future” (p. 31). With help from SDAD (Self-Directing Automatic Driver) and Super SDAD he quickly shows that it could, but adds that such usage would not itself ascribe consciousness to the machine. Of a list of admittedly P-predicates every one could be applied to a sufficiently complex computer. None necessarily ascribe consciousness to the machine, but neither can such consciousness be outlawed at the start. He therefore tells the sad story of R. Sally and Simon. R. Sally is a robot tailor made to satisfy Simon; she or it is then broken and he finds out the truth: does he want it put together again (as a machine) or her restored to life (as a person)? Puccetti thinks that Sally cannot even be a moral object, let alone a

person, because it has no feelings, and argues this point against several philosophers, by resurrecting one of the theses of chapter one, that moral predicates presuppose sensation and emotion. A robot may say “I have a pain in my left shoulder”, rather than “R. Sally II has an overload circuit at LX5612” (cf. p. 42), but this does not mean that *she* has a pain. Nothing inorganic can have a pain.

If there is nothing in Sally that corresponds to sexual glands, it would be insane of Simon to suppose that she had desired him. But what is the force of “corresponds” – certainly sex plays no part in Sally’s self-reproduction (though it could be arranged), but perhaps the programming itself introduces desirous feelings? Possibly we should require that it be in some sense free before we class it as a personal being (a problem that Puccetti does not discuss), but the fact of its having been programmed does not immediately outlaw it: so, after all, have we. Even if Sally has a complete set of organs, it is still a machine. Simon is asking the impossible, that life be restored to what never had life, that feelings should appear in a thing that is no part of organic evolution (in which pain is a survival mechanism). “Sensations of pain arise from contact with (hard things) in the course of evolution; to suppose that once they are properly organised pain will also occur to them is to close one’s eyes to their nature” (p. 45). This is the core of Puccetti’s argument, and there is a lot wrong with it:

*Simon:* Very well, Sally is not a machine. Sally is alive.

*Puccetti:* But living things are protoplasmic, evolved over generations, etc.

*Simon:* You have proved otherwise. Living things are self-determining organisms with built-in impulses to self-preservation and the like. Sally was produced by analogy with ordinary men, but is nonetheless alive. (Cf. Aristotle).

*Puccetti:* But it cannot even have pains.

*Simon:* You have forgotten Wittgenstein’s proof that pains are not private sensations. Certainly she does not have precisely the same warning system as do we, but she undoubtedly has one. And her pseudo-pains are as disagreeable to her (being a threat to the fulfilment of her most basic urges) as are ours to us. To all intents and purposes she has pains.

Puccetti’s final confusion on this point lies in his failure to examine his basic concept, that of a feeling. What would be painful in one context is pleasurable in another: that is, the pain does not consist of certain nervous messages, but in their significance to the basic drives which are genetically coded in us and computer-coded in a robot. If a robot is a self-determining, symbol-using entity with various urges there

would be no good *a priori* reason to deny it the status of a person. In conclusion, I might refer to Poul Anderson's story *Epilogue*, in *Time and the Stars* in which some space-travellers return to earth by courtesy of Einstein several million years after their departure, to find that very simple, self-reproducing robots have evolved over the years, as the templates governing their construction are damaged by radiation, into a complete range of organisms reflecting the old protoplasmic orders, and including a race of personal beings. There does not appear to be anything wrong in this story that would not also be wrong in an account of our evolution, and if this is possible why should we not compress a few million years of evolution (as Puccetti envisages in his discussion of androids)? There may be some reason against all this, but Puccetti has not given it.

Chapter Three, "Extraterrestrial Persons I", is a summary of current thought on the likelihood of finding intelligent life outside the earth. After dismissing several "unscientific" assertions of the multiplicity of worlds, he turns to the emergence of a scientific basis for such belief. Copernicus decentralized the earth, Darwin decentralized human history. Now is the time to decentralize terrestrial life. It has often been observed, though apparently not in Puccetti's hearing, that the earth's central position in the pre-Copernican universe did not imply a central importance: rather the reverse – the earth was at the bottom of the pit. Similarly post-Darwinian evolutionary theory consistently exalts man as the crown of evolution. It is mere rhetoric to talk of any blow to human pride in either case.

Puccetti's extraterrestrials are dependent upon the possibility of extrasolar planetary systems, for no other planet of this system could sustain life as we know it at any interesting level – and that, for Puccetti, covers all the life there is. He therefore outlines the various theories of planetary origin currently in vogue, and concludes that there might be intelligent life within fifty light years. The problem of verification is what principally troubles him, and after considerable discussion he concludes that only electromagnetic communication offers any practical hope. Even by this method the hypothesis could only be confirmed (with luck): it could never, particularly in its most general form, be refuted. Puccetti observes the analogy with doctrines of the afterlife, but reassures himself by describing the hypothesis of extraterrestrial life as a scientific extrapolation from scientific laws which are open to refutation. The ultimate context of science, however, is a belief in a rational universe, and it does not seem that this is any more or less verifiable or falsifiable than any more explicitly religious context.

Chapter Four, "Extraterrestrial Persons II", considers the possible nature of extraterrestrial intelligences, and their claim to person status. He accepts both that only carbon in water can provide a basis for life (in fact recent experiments suggest that ammonia was the original embryonic fluid of the biosphere), and that evolution is inevitably convergent. All intelligent beings must be man-like – a very convenient result. The stages in his argument are of many different values, and in general he would have done well to remember Aristotle's paradoxical dictum that we cannot know what a thing is until we know that it is – the biology of imaginary beings is necessarily obscure. His discussion of locomotion is typical of his method – "sliding on slime limits the range", but perhaps slime is all there is; "wriggling is too slow": too slow for what? snakes find it quite convenient, though (eschewing telekinesis or prehensile trunks) they are presumably debarred from a constructive manipulation of their environment, and hence(?) from intelligence; "insectile structure imposes limits on size": what of hive-intelligence? "large numbers of legs do not suit the predatory life" – millipedes would not agree, but what has the predatory life to do with it? Man himself (pace Puccetti's apparent beliefs) is descended on current theory from arboreal herbivores who turned terrestrial and omnivorous, not from predators.

Further examination of Puccetti's arguments on this point would be a waste of energy, though it is certainly amusing to see a convinced evolutionist abandoning the main argument for common ancestry (homological structure) so readily. Isolated animal groups, in South America and Australia have developed ranges of organism closely paralleling the main stream, as if in an effort to fill every ecological niche, but it is impossible to tell (without any controls) what is due to evolutionary logic and what to a common genetic heritage.

His real reason for accepting the universal force of convergent evolution is clearly his wish to preserve the possibility of communication, which would be outlawed on his view if organisms were too dissimilar. In fact, insofar as all living creatures are self-determining entities with an impulse to self-preservation, and all intelligent beings are symbol-using, we need not despair of the outcome so far in advance. Inevitably there will be differences and communication gaps (there are even between the tribes of *homo sapiens*), but we have excellent reason to suppose that there will also be extensive analogies: the laws of logic are universal, so also are the general needs of living things.

In order that the hypothesis should be verifiable, it must also be the case that the majority of intelligent races develop a technology of an



appropriate level. Puccetti employs convergent evolution to argue that all tool-making races must do so. It may indeed be true that an advanced science spreads everywhere once it has been developed: it does not seem obvious that it must develop. Imperial China had many sophisticated technical skills long before Europe, but was too bound by bureaucracy and the Book of Changes (with its system of personal law) to develop the system of arithmetical law which is the basis of natural science. Once such a system has been developed it can collapse only if the society loses interest or if it destroys itself. He rejects the first possibility on the grounds that no human society ever has. This amounts to an *a priori* rejection of any treatment of science as a cultural phenomenon subject to the occult laws that govern changes in fashion. It is also a refusal to see obvious probabilities: if Puccetti is right in thinking that we are confined to our own solar system, it is very probable that we shall be driven in on ourselves, retaining a technology, but abandoning our obsessive interest in the external world. The current educational swing from science, though partly a matter of fashion, and popular interest in Hindu and other mysticisms is a sign of one possible end.

On the other hand Puccetti appeals to the non-convergence of evolution to outlaw the possibility of destruction, denying that our political history is typical of personal races. He skips too lightly over the fact the greatest boost to science is given by war, and that technological sophistication is therefore very likely to be associated with a habit of war, particularly as the impulse to defend one's territory must by Puccetti's own arguments be common to all living things of the level necessary for intelligence. As for describing the Roman and Chinese empires as stable and internally peaceful, this is to give up the point – for both depended heavily on the rigid control of invention, nor were they. It is of course possible that the world will be united, and possible that many worlds have already been united, but Puccetti cannot be so optimistic so readily.

There is a chance that the hypothesis will be verified. Can anything be predicted about the moral relationships obtaining within an extraterrestrial community? He now returns once more to convergent evolution and to Hart's theory of natural law. From the observation that survival is what matters most to most men Hart deduces certain things that most men, having their present biological properties, will require, which together necessitate a moral community. Puccetti considers that these also apply to extraterrestrials, but his arguments are weak. Even if our counterparts are descended by the same sort of route, they need not be so vulnerable, or be so precisely equal in power

that they can never hurt each other. There might easily be an obvious master race (Puccetti has earlier admitted the possibility of two or more personal races developing on the same planet). That property is required simply for food, clothing and shelter even in the case of man is doubtful: more probably it fulfils some territorial or Freudian need — and a more psychologically aware civilization might have dispensed with it. Finally a race of greater natural strength might have developed the instinctive chivalry of the true predators such as the wolf, and therefore need no coercive authority. Of Hart's requirements only that of limited altruism appears to have any universal biological basis, and even this could be questioned. In short the disparity between the arguments examined in this paragraph and the last reveals clearly that Puccetti is concerned chiefly to prove to himself that extraterrestrial intelligence must share our values.

He turns thankfully to the moral relationship between extraterrestrials and ourselves. Direct physical contact must inevitably, in his view, lead to war unless it is preceded by electromagnetic contact. In this as elsewhere he shows a considerable lack of imagination: anyone interested in the problem would do better to read the science-fiction which Puccetti derides. He determines, however, that friendly relationships even in direct contact must depend on the possibility of moral relationships over the ether. He concludes that in such electromagnetic contact the more advanced race would only wish to help the less from altruism; further we could easily hurt each other's feelings.

But suppose there is never any contact? Suppose the hypothesis remains for ever unverified? Our belief in it could have no direct moral relevance, but it might indirectly: "someone somewhere shares a value with you!" "Pallid comfort, yet comfort of a kind" (p. 118). In fact Puccetti can have no assurance of any technological society outside earth. Such a society requires "the search for knowledge, the desire for truth, the willingness to subordinate individual interest to social aims for the common benefit": Puccetti has not even attempted to show that such qualities are biologically grounded and therefore universal. His argument has been (i) that toolmaking leads inevitably to technology, and (ii) that technology requires the above qualities. But in that case (i) is false.

The final chapter, "Divine Persons" faces the religious world-view with the problem of extraterrestrial intelligence. Puccetti thinks it a serious matter that belief in extraterrestrials plays no part in any major religion. He does not make his reasons clear: "while it does not affect impersonal cults for individual salvation, the monotheistic belief in a

kingdom of moral beings headed by God implies that extraterrestrials ought to be important to the believer". Certainly the believer's system ought to be able to embrace such beings when the need arises, but a believer does not need Puccetti's "pallid comfort". Cosmologies of devils and angels have in the past fulfilled the function of making man something less than the only personal creature which God has created, and Puccetti's rejection of such beings as irrelevant because non-natural is both tendentious and obscure. He appears to think that any true religion must inform believers of all the truths of natural science, for only in such a context can one believe in Puccetti's extraterrestrials. So perhaps it must, eventually: "the Holy Spirit shall lead you into all truth". But to suppose that all truth can be simply handed out en bloc to a waiting multitude is to take a ludicrously simplistic view both of revelation and of scientific theory.

"Terrestrial monotheism seems just as provincial as Humanism" (p. 125), in that it leaves us to think that the only actors in the drama are God and man. This is historically false: human history was, for over a thousand years, seen as an episode in the wider history of angelic perdition. It is also irrelevant. Our drama has God and man as actors: what other dramas God may star in, what other actors He may one day introduce to us are a matter for speculation, not of faith.

Puccetti supposes that believers can save their faith only by dismissing extraterrestrials from the religious world. Terrestrial faiths are no more than terrestrial. He reinforces this point by appealing to Macintyre's rash definition of a religion as an authoritative tradition. His criticisms are sufficiently well-founded to be dull, and assume throughout that religious claims are not factual: some philosophical theologians may have laid themselves open to this charge, but their errors are no more to be taken as typically religious than Russell's straw-Christian. Further, Puccetti continues, all terrestrial religions are particularist: to ask an extraterrestrial to believe a terrestrial faith is to ask him to worship a man and to accept definite social customs. That the latter often has been the case can be seen from the unfortunate history of Victorian missions, to range no further but it is not clear that this is necessary: it is indeed denounced by Paul. As for worshipping a man: why not? All *hnanu*, to use Lewis's term, are men.

After a few remarks on Judaism and Islam, accusing them of a necessary attachment to terrestrial history and local custom, Puccetti directs his main attack against Christianity. If the only salvation is through Christ most persons are doomed. Dismissing the Milne plan for electromagnetically dispensing the gospel, he considers the possibility of multiple incarnation. He replies that given only one incarnation per

race, and only  $10^{18}$  races there would still not be time for God to be successively incarnate in all. But He could not be simultaneously incarnate in more than one race: if Jesus = God and Wong of Tau Ceti IV = God then Jesus = Wong, which (as they are separate corporeal persons) is impossible. The extreme problems of Trinitarian and incarnational doctrine do not now concern me – it is not, after all, irrational to believe what one does not understand: consider the mathematician's acceptance of  $e^{i\pi} + 1 = 0$ . Several points can be made: (i) why must we suppose either that all races need redemption or that the mode of redemption is always the same? (ii) Wong and Jesus may be two bodies without being two persons: in each there is one will, and that the same will, and two natures; (iii) that God can be seen in Wong is no diminution either of God or of Jesus; (iv) there is no paradox in God's becoming man or Tau Cetan: as both were made in His image, and both are fallen, *only* God can be true man, or Tau Cetan.

Puccetti concludes by revisiting Hick's resurrection world, posing but not discussing the difficulty of imputing two bodies to one person. Hick had concluded from the apparent impossibility of meeting God (an abstract and absolute being) that it was the presence of Christ which made the resurrection world into the kingdom of God: in view of Wong and his  $10^{18} - 2$  confreres, which Christ is it that fills this function? These difficulties are unreal: even on an ordinary level sameness of body is not a function of sameness of stuff, but of sameness of form (in an Aristotelian sense) – the corpse is not our body, and no more detracts from the required identity of the resurrection body with the old than does the fact of nail-clippings. Secondly, the difficulty of imagining in advance what it would be like to meet God does not necessarily mean that the event would be hard to recognize when it happened: God is by definition the well-spring of joy and eternal life. Thirdly it is not docetist to suppose that the only-begotten shows His human being to some, and His Tau Cetan being to others: both are really He.

Puccetti's final paragraphs admit the real significance of his book. The likely existence of extraterrestrial intelligence makes any but the most abstract God parochial (in fact, he has not even attempted to show this, only that current religions are parochial: even in that more restricted aim he has failed). It also provides a substitute, an extrahuman reservoir of value, for religion. This modern cult of the extraterrestrial has until now largely been confined to the members of Flying Saucer clubs and the like, and Puccetti has perhaps performed a service by attempting to put the view on a more rational ground. "Rational", that is, only on his own terms. The steps in Puccetti's

argument that seem tendentious are forced on him by his total world-view: by assuming that to the believer it is the religion that matters, not the God, he forces the multiplication of religions in such a manner as to cast doubt on their truth even if they were largely agreed. Within a different world-view there seems no difficulty at all in supposing God to be worshipped in many forms on many worlds. That space-travel and the discovery of extraterrestrial intelligence will have a colossal effect on our philosophies need not be doubted, but there seems no reason to think that the effect will be totally destructive.

Puccetti's failure is a failure to examine his own basic terms and presuppositions. As a consequence his work is tendentious, slipshod and devoid of understanding. It also deserves some praise for being the first attempt by a professional philosopher in a field hitherto restricted to writers of science-fiction (though it displays a regrettable ignorance of the latter), and for the stimulating nature of the arguments (even if they stimulate only to disagreement). Puccetti is clearly a very clever man – he deserves better theories.

S. R. L. Clark

### *Wittgenstein's Late Philosophy*

“Wissenschaft ist gründlich. Schulung ist eine Ungründlichkeit”.

(True knowledge goes to the roots. Formally acquired knowledge is superficial.)

This remark of Wittgenstein's to Karl Britton [1] is doubly self-referring. True knowledge was Wittgenstein's interest from the *Notebooks* to his notes *On Knowledge and Certainty*; and the remark refers to itself. A superficial translation would read “Science. . .” (in the slang sense of “empirical science”).

The remark applies also to Dr. Specht's book [2], which shows immense industry but little knowledge of Wittgenstein. One reason is that the apparatus of scholarship has been applied prematurely [3]. The others are more serious. At all times Wittgenstein was concerned with a set of philosophical problems: the same set of problems. These problems derived from Frege and Russell, later from Johnson, Moore, Brouwer, and from Wittgenstein himself. He was his own most persistent interlocutor. And you cannot understand his work by looking at the problems of the later Oxford school of linguistic analysts. They came after him; in this sense only were they his followers. But Dr. Specht uses their work as a key to the most transparent sections of the *Philosophical Investigations*. In addition, he

tells us that he “seeks to clarify the linguistic-philosophical and ontological foundations of Wittgenstein’s late work”. This puts him out of court right away. What ever is true of the *Tractatus*, in the *Blue and Brown Books*, in the *Philosophical Investigations* and in his other post 1929 writings, Wittgenstein is not concerned with a “theory of infant learning”, or a “theory of meaning” or a “theory of language”. And Dr. Specht ends, “Thus, when Wittgenstein demands: ‘... we may not advance any kind of theory. There must not be anything hypothetical in our considerations. We must do away with all *explanation*, and description must take its place’ (*Philosophical Investigations*, 109), when Wittgenstein makes this demand, then every individual point in it runs counter to his own conception of language, which is a *theory* that has hypothetical moments and is used to *explain* certain phenomena”. Now, you might as well say that Wisdom had a theory of horses or Moore a theory of the table. How does Specht go so far off the track?

At the beginning is his dogma, asserted in the modern fashion, and not argued. “One of the central problems of the philosophy of language is the question about the relation between language and the world of objects. The fundamental relation existing between a linguistic sign and that which the linguistic sign signifies is generally called the ‘signification relation’”. Now is there any such “fundamental relation”? (Call it what you like.) Sometimes there may be, as between a proper name and the bearer; and even here there are many. We use a name to call someone, to list him, . . . the name may be on a tag round his neck, It may show his descent, it may be “given” him with an appropriate ritual, it may have been earned and “mean” something. Now here the idea that there is a relation, like a subtle invisible wire produced by what Wittgenstein called “an occult process . . . a *queer* connexion of a word with an object” (*Philosophical Investigations*, 38), is understandable.

But what about verbs, pronouns, conjunctions, quantifiers? In the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein, who then accepted that there must be a relation between language and the world, showed how logical and mathematical words could be construed. The important point about his later comments on language is that they are a part of his commentary on the *Tractatus*. (Part I of the *Philosophical Investigations* at one time was to have been printed alongside the *Tractatus*. In his 1945 Foreword, Wittgenstein wrote: “It seemed to me that I should publish those old thoughts and the new ones together: that the latter could be seen in the right light only by contrast with and against the background of my old way of thinking”. Although the editors state “This plan will be carried out in the purely German edition of the present work”, this

has not been done.)

You might say that the whole point of the late philosophy is to show that the metaphysical dogma of the fundamental relation, essential to the flawed mirror of the *Tractatus*, is not right. That does not mean that it is wrong either. The relation is thought by many to lie in the head, “in the mind”, “in the brain”, and much is made of assumed “mechanisms” of association. But of course this is no good even if you were to find mechanisms in the real head, because what is needed for this kind of work is the very thin wire, the internal relation between “linguistic sign and that which the sign signifies”. All that association gives you is a token currency like paper money; and what is needed is something better than gold, a perfect picture of the world: the world itself, as Swift knew, is too much.

The next misunderstanding is crucial. He writes “For Wittgenstein, the investigation of word usage in the language-game has primacy, in other words . . . admission to ontological questions is to be won first via ‘linguistic analysis’ i.e. via the analysis of word usage”, and again “. . . The meaning of a word is for Wittgenstein determined by the rules of its use, . . . a description of the way the word is used, i.e. by a linguistic analysis of word usage”. This is twisted in three ways. Specht believes “use” to be intelligible only with reference to our “use” of tools. He thinks that “usage” depends on rules, and that “use” depends on both. Here something can be done to straighten him out.

First “usage” is for lexicographers: “The natural history of a word can be of no concern to logic”, Wittgenstein wrote in the *Philosophische Bemerkungen* (15). Second, Chomsky may believe that what people actually say is governed or controlled by a set of rules, but it has only to be stated to be seen to derisory. For “The application of a word is not bounded everywhere by strict rules” (*Philosophical Investigations*, 84).

The concept of “use” is well illustrated by the example Dr. Specht quotes from the *Philosophical Investigations* (556), but he has missed the point. Wittgenstein writes “Imagine a language . . .” Now, “use” may be described as the role the word plays in the language game, or as the range of its logical field of force: most descriptions are not helpful, but the following may be of interest: The “use” of a word is the set of possible interconnections in the logical space of that concept; its determination is *a priori*; we do this in many ways, among others by comparing and contrasting. In the *Brown Book*, e.g. (p. 100) he writes: “Let us see what roles the words ‘can’ and ‘to be able to’ play in our language. Consider these examples. . . .” Now no one would think that (44) to (49), which follow, are an account of how we actually use the

words “can” and “to be able to”; but they throw light on or make transparent the concept “can”. True, it is description and so “leaves everything as it is”; but it is descriptive of *logical possibilities*.

An important application of his misunderstanding is his discussion of “Can one play chess without the queen?” He says, “Wittgenstein’s famous question ‘an one play chess without the queen’, a question which can also only be decided after having previously determined the linguistic usage of ‘playing chess’”. (In his *Ludwig Wittgenstein 1934-1937* [4] Wisdom wrote, “If I were asked to answer, in one sentence, the question ‘What was Wittgenstein’s biggest contribution to philosophy’ I should answer ‘his asking of the question “Can one play chess without the queen?”’ ”.) The question is paradoxical and puzzling for the following reason: Wittgenstein knew very well that one could play chess without the queen. And suppose that he did not, we may offer the following proof: Article 6 of the Laws of Chess [5] is headed “Chess at Odds”. It contains the statement “The player who gives the odds of a piece usually has the move”. From this it follows, tediously, that odds of a piece may be given; since a queen is a piece, odds of a queen may be given; thus one player may play without a queen; thus one may play chess without a queen. Specht refers to Wisdom in support of what he is saying about this. I discussed this with Wisdom the other day, who said he would approve of the following formulation: Suppose that the rules of chess read, “Rule 1: One can play chess without the queen”, Now ask the question “Can one play chess without the queen?” What is the effect of the question *now*?

The point is discussed in the *Philosophische Bemerkungen*, in the *Blue and Brown Books* and in the *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics* as well as the *Philosophical Investigations*. There is no ineluctable step from a rule to its application. It is not automatic (or if it is, the machine is not ethereal but a physical machine that may break down). Each application involves a decision. And in this case the question to be decided is “Would this still be chess? Would we call this chess?” Certain analogous questions are easier than Wittgenstein’s, e.g. “Can one play chess without the King?” (Stone) or “Can one play chess and take as long as one likes over each move?” But the question, the logical or philosophical one arises; neither lexicography nor legislation can do anything towards settling it.

The analogy between chess and formal logical systems goes back to Frege. It was made much of in the thirties by Reichenbach [6] and Waismann [7]. A record of discussions between Wittgenstein and Waismann concerning this analogy has now been published [8, 9]. It was closely connected with the Wittgensteinian concept of “logical



syntax” and its ghostly survivor, the “syntax” of modern “computational linguistics”.

The rejection of the analogy for the case of language by *Philosophical Investigations* (84) does not mean that there are no regularities, that how we use a word is random [*Philosophical Investigations* (207)]. But it does not lie “between” the chess case and a random use of words either. “Language” is a “family resemblance” concept and to select the paradigm of chess or *Principia Mathematica* or any other one instance is to be fascinated by one feature only of the complex interconnections that make up the concept.

Dr. Specht pays careful attention to the concept of “Language game”, which has a family resemblance to “game” and to “language”. He is worried by the lack of a proper definition. But this is precisely what Wittgenstein would not, and if his account of concepts is correct, could not give [10]. One of Wittgenstein’s great insights was that the relations between objects that fall under a concept are those of family resemblances [11]. They need not have any one property in common [12]. He refused to attempt to define this concept. Now the mathematical models that exist are not completely satisfactory but the lack of transitivity in the relation “family resemblance” eliminates many traditional inferences. It is of course vital for his conception of philosophy and philosophical method. Whenever we compare two objects they will be similar and also different. The process of description (comparison, contrast), will enable us to “look and see” the similarities and the differences. And that is all that is needed.

Apart from the questions already discussed, there are three facets of Wittgenstein’s thought that mean that philosophy will never be the same again. The first is the problem of *a priori* knowledge or necessary truth, which has been cleared up. The subtlety of Wittgenstein’s discussions concerning logic and mathematics, has not been appreciated by most workers on foundational questions. What is important here is the idea that the philosophy of mathematics should not intervene in the disputes about continuity, infinity, set theory, consistency and proof, but leaving mathematics “as it is” achieve a clear survey of the “motley” of mathematics, make perspicuous the concept of “proof”, and eliminate the myth of the “logical machine”. It is true that seeking for such clarity may lead to an intervention. But this only because, e.g. set theory may be *accidentally* involved (as was the case with Cantor himself) with dogmatic metaphysics. And Wittgenstein was not a Finitist, as Specht thinks – see e.g. “Finitism and Behaviourism are quite similar trends. Both say, but surely all we have here is. . . . Both deny the existence of something, both with a view to escaping from a

confusion" [13].

The concept of certain or necessary knowledge is connected by Wittgenstein with the "certainty" of logic and mathematics. These are only certain in consequence of some games in fact being played (Calculation, Proof. . . .). There is no *necessity* that they should be played at all, or played like this; but if they are, certain points are fixed. . . . In unpublished notes Wittgenstein writes "What belongs to the description of a language game belongs to logic". And also "If the proposition  $12 \times 12 = 144$  is exempted from doubt, then so must non-mathematical propositions be". It is a mistake, as Specht does, to connect Wittgenstein's views with Poincaré's conventionalism. We do not "choose" our form of life; no child "chooses" to talk, to count, or to calculate, he is trained to do so. A sophisticated mathematician may choose to count, say, mod  $m$  [14], but *our* counting game is one in which we *find* ourselves, and the fixed points, though not *necessary* are necessary for *us*. And if things were different, they would be different.

The philosophical question of "mind" and "body" brilliantly illumined in the *Blue Book*, is treated in a more detailed and profound way in *Philosophical Investigations*. If today we can sensibly ask and answer questions about the extent to which machines "think" and "feel", these discussions have made it possible. Specht says "Wittgenstein is taking up a peculiar position intermediate between Behaviourism and Dualism. . .". He is wrong; Wittgenstein is neither a Behaviourist nor a Dualist. It does not follow that he is in a "peculiar intermediate position". The situation is like this. The "idea of a little man within" the "picture of the inner process" is questioned in a series of cases: Reading, copying, intending, feeling, remembering. . . Wittgenstein questions (how much of his writing is in the form of questions!) and offers other considerations which a Behaviourist might use when he is pleading. *Against* the Behaviourist he offers considerations too. For both sides of the coin are wrong. What we need to do, and it is very difficult, is to see *all* the complications of the situation. Wisdom set out many of these in *Other Minds* and in Part 11 of the *Philosophical Investigations* there is more. Of course the work is never done, for a stupid myth is infinitely resistant.

It is often thought, and Wittgenstein himself suggests in his 1945 Foreword, that the style of the *Philosophical Investigations* is flawed, the result of a failure to write a coherent text. I wish to suggest on the contrary that the style, the arrangement, the order and the disorder, are essential to what he is doing. The *Blue and Brown Books* and *Philosophische Bemerkungen* are continuous, linearly ordered manuscripts, and he rejected them as valueless. And even the *Brown*

*Book*, by numbering the language games, uses many explicit cross-references and pointers to other passages. Of course in the *Tractatus* he had used decimals to attempt to show the way that propositions were related.

In the *Philosophical Investigations* we have a series of distinct but connected arguments, running through many separate numbered entries. Sometimes there is an explicit cross-reference; most often the pointer must be constructed by the reader. There is a high degree of connectivity between all the points in *this* logical space. It is not circular only, but more like an infinite set of intersecting rings. It is possible to read it in the printed order; or to read it following the notion of “following a rule” only; or to read it as a treasure house to be opened anywhere. For with *this* book (as with *Zettel* where there is no order except that imposed by the editors) the reader is essentially involved. The dialectic of the argument, in which there does not have to be a winner, must be worked through to “dissolve” the problem.

The arguments are presented for and against, the analogies and lack of analogies noted, the abysses marked; now the reader may draw an inference himself – he will be wise not to. But whether he now answers “Yes” or “No” or “I don’t know” or rejects the question, the problem *may* now be transparent. The process is circular. But the great philosophical masters have always known that we come back to our starting point.

That is why Wittgenstein deserves to be read and does not deserve to have books written about him.

One historical point: Wittgenstein did publish between the *Tractatus* and “On Logical Form”. He published “Wörterbuch für Volksschulen” (Hölder Pichler-Tempski, Vienna 1926) [15].

Stuart Linney

#### NOTES

[1] *Karl Britton*: “Recollections of L. Wittgenstein”, *Cambridge Journal*, Vol. VII, No. 12, 1954.

[2] *Ernst Konrad Specht*: “The Foundations of Wittgenstein’s Late Philosophy”, translated by D. E. Walford. Manchester University Press, 1969.

[3] *McGuinness*’ critical biography is not ready, and if his introduction to “Ludwig Wittgenstein und der Wiener Kreis” (Blackwell, 1967) is a measure, will be valuable in getting the history straight.

Further, the publication of the manuscripts is not complete. Since Dr. Specht’s book was first published in Germany in 1963, we have had the Conversations recorded by Waismann in the above mentioned book, the “Philosophische Bemerkungen”, “Zettel”, “Lectures and Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology and Religious Belief”, the “Lecture on Ethics” and the “Letters from Ludwig Wittgenstein with a memoir by Paul Engelmann”. And

more is promised. See note by R. Rhees in "Philosophische Bemerkungen" (p. 347), and the "Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics" are merely a selection from more extensive manuscripts (p. VIII e Editor's Preface to the "Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics").

[4] Reprinted in "Paradox and Discovery", Blackwell, 1965, at p. 88.

[5] See *S. Tartakower*: "A Breviary of Chess" (translated) J. du Mont. Published: George Routledge & Sons Ltd., London, 1937.

[6] *H. Reichenbach*: "Experience and Prediction". University of Chicago Press, 1938.

[7] *F. Waismann*: "Einführung in das mathematische Denken". Gerold & Co., Vienna, 1936.

[8] *Ludwig Wittgenstein*: "Philosophische Bemerkungen" (Zweiter Anhang). Blackwell, 1965.

[9] "Ludwig Wittgenstein und der Wiener Kreis", shorthand notes recorded by *F. Waismann*, edited by *B. F. McGuinness*. (Blackwell, 1965.)

[10] *R. L. Stone*: "A Note on Family Resemblances" (unpublished).

[11] *J. R. Bambrough*: "Universals & Family Resemblances", *Proc. Arist. Soc.*, May, 1961.

[12] "Blue Book", p. 19; "Brown Book", p. 133, "Philosophical Investigations" (72).

[13] "Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics", II, 18.

[14] See e.g. Language Game 31/ of the "Brown Book".

[15] *Ludwig Hansel*: "Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951)", in "Wissenschaft und Weltbild". Oct. 1951.

## Comment

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### *Mysticism and Religion*

John Macmurray's characterization of "mysticism" (*T. to T.*, Jan. 1969, p. 74) made me rub my eyes in astonishment. For in every case the things which he imputes to mysticism are ones which the mysticism I know strongly disavows, and the things which he says mysticism lacks are the ones which, to me, properly describe it. And my use of the term can hardly be regarded as peculiar, since it agrees with the usage adopted in the most authoritative as well as the most widely-selling books on the subject today, for example, Evelyn Underhill's *Mysticism*, Sidney Spencer's *Mysticism in World Religion*, and the books by F. C. Happold.

What does Macmurray allege of mysticism? He asserts:

- (1) Mysticism is primarily "theoretical" and not "practical".
- (2) Mysticism is "a particular aspect of culture", not "a way of life".
- (3) It rests on "some peculiar element in experience", and is not "a way of regarding *any* experience".
- (4) It is "primarily an *aesthetic* experience". which (5) "tries to reach an intuition of the whole".
- (6) It must "put a frame round" each intuited "individual element".
- (7) Mysticism "is not a foundation".
- (8) It is not "communal" but is "almost fiercely individual".
- (9) The original "source" of religion "can only be the inherent mutuality of the person – the universal experience of being oneself a member of a personal group"; and this, according to Macmurray, is outside the scope of mysticism because of its "fiercely individual character".

It would be possible to argue that what Macmurray calls "religion" I call "mysticism", and to leave the situation at that. On the other hand it would appear that Macmurray believes that people called mystics have lived in some wrong or distorted way, contrary to the wiser teachings of "religion". This may have been so in the case of some recluses, but mystics who have endeavoured to teach the "unitive life" – and these are the most authoritative – say something quite different.

As a counter to Macmurray's series of allegations I submit the

following few quotations, representative of many hundreds which could be adduced.

(1) *Mysticism is practical, through and through.*

“Mysticism is practical, not theoretical”.

(Underhill, *Mysticism*, 12th Edition, p. 82)

“Not that one should give up, neglect or forget his inner life for a moment, but he must learn to work in it, with it and out of it, so that the unity of his soul may break out into his activities and his activities shall lead him back to that unity. In this way one is taught to work as a free man should”.

(Eckhart, trs. Blakeney, p. 37)

(2) *Mysticism is a way of life.*

“It is the central aim of the mystic to live in the light and inspiration of this experience [of the divine Life], to be one with God in an abiding union”. (Sidney Spencer, *The Deep Things of God*, p. 51)

“I teach you a teaching for the rejection of the getting of any self . . . by which one, even in this very life, may attain to the fulfilment and perfect growth of the Wisdom, a way by practising which impure conditions can be put away by you and pure conditions brought to increase. . . . When these things are done there will be, as result, Joy, Zest, Calm, Mindfulness, and the Happy Life”.

(Digha Nikāya, ix)

(3) *Mysticism is a way of regarding all experience.*

“The man who is in the right way has God truly with him. Now, if he has God in very truth, he has him in all places, in the road and when he is in somebody’s company as well as in church. . . .”

(Eckhart, *Spiritual Instructions*)

“The great central fact of the universe is that spirit of infinite life and power that is back of all, that manifests itself in and through all”.

(Trine)

“Everything shines only after that shining. His shining illuminates this ALL”.

(Katha Upanishad)

“There are three classes of devotees. The lowest one says, ‘God is up there’; that is, he points to heaven. The mediocre devotee says that God dwells in the heart as the ‘Inner Controller’. But the highest devotee says, ‘God alone has become everything. All things that we perceive are so many forms of God’ ”.

(Ramakrishna)

(4) *Mysticism is not primarily an aesthetic experience.*

“ . . . it entirely transcends our sensory-intellectual consciousness”.

(Stace, *The Teachings of the Mystics*, p. 15)

"I have gone up to the highest that I have, and behold, the Word was towering yet higher. My curiosity took me to my lowest depth to look for Him, nevertheless He was found still deeper. If I looked outside me, I found he was beyond my farthest, if I looked within, He was more inward still. And so I have understood the truth of that which I had read, 'In Him we live and move and have our being' "

(St. Bernard)

(5) *Mystical experience is not a self-projected ideation.*

"For the mystic God is not a dogma or a hypothesis, but a living, felt reality".

(Spencer, op cit., p. 51)

"Man cannot realise God by self-exertion alone. For the vision of God His grace is absolutely necessary".

(Nikhilananda)

(6) *Mystical experience does not isolate individual elements from the whole.*

"The most important, the central characteristic in which all *fully developed* mystical experiences agree, and which is the last analysis is definitive of them and serves to mark them off from other kinds of experience, is that they involve the apprehension of *an ultimate nonsensuous unity in all things*".

(Stace, op. cit.)

"In the intelligible world every part is born from the whole, and is simultaneously the whole and a part; wherever is a part, the whole reveals itself".

(Ploninus, v. 8.4)

(7) *Mysticism is concerned with the ultimate foundation of all life and existence.*

"Mysticism is a manifestation of something which is at the root of all religion".

(Happold)

"This phenomenal world of matter and individual consciousness is only a partial reality and is the manifestation of a Divine Ground in which all partial realities have their being".

(Happold)

"The unfathomable will, which is the Father and a beginning of all being, generates itself within itself into a place of apprehensibility . . . and the place is the ground and beginning of all beings".

(Boehme, *The Election of Grace*)

(8) and (9). *The realities to which mysticism directs itself are essentially communal, and are inseparable from the mutuality of human relations.*

"So we being many are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another".

(St. Paul)

“If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another . . . He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness”. (St. John)

“In a deep sense it may be said of him [the mature mystic] that he now participates according to his measure in that divine-human life which mediates between man and the Eternal, and constitutes the ‘salvation of the world’ ”. (Underhill, op. cit., p. 433)

Like Mr. Macmurray, I look forward to *T. to T.* each quarter. But I would say, “Do not be afraid of orienting your publication as much as you please towards the universality and objectivity of mysticism as I understand it. Such orienting is just what gives it its special value over more conventionally oriented journals”.

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### *A Note on the ‘Power’ Concept*

In *T. to T.* of October 1968 Dorothy Emmet talks of “a ‘power’ concept which cuts across the rigid distinction of the empirical and mystical and so may be, if you like, a frankly metaphysical notion” (p. 50). She is of course not the first to use such a concept: the notion of “a power outside oneself” is as old as the notion of a god. But she does face squarely the difficulties that arise over the concept, though she thinks them not insuperable. In this Note I want to maintain that this concept can do nothing for religion.

Dorothy Emmet plainly wants to say that there *is* (or may be) such a power, and that one may *believe that* there is. These seem to be in some sense factual assertions, at least in that they may be contrasted with merely “feeling as if” there was a power, or believing that there is not. I take it that she does not wish to remove the concept from all such notions as “reasons”, “evidence”, “grounds”, etc. For a belief in the existence of something which was totally divorced from all such notions would not be a belief at all. And in fact she does give reasons, not only for the existence of this power, but also for its being of a certain nature and origin.

I do not wish to examine these reasons (though it seems odd to say that Freud thought that “the unconscious is not a source of creative energy”), but simply to point out that this concept of “a power” is not new. We are familiar with many “powers”, both “inside” and “outside”



ourselves (whatever criterion one uses for determining this), and no doubt may come to be familiar with many others. Those with which we are familiar we describe in fairly clear terms, such as “electricity”, “gravity”, etc.: those with which we are less familiar we describe as, e.g., “the creative urge”, “spontaneous energy”, “a feeling that all is well with the world”, and so forth. No doubt some of these may be ‘trans-social’, “universal”, etc., and require “self-abandonment” or “non-self-seeking dedication” for their proper use. (Nor must it be forgotten that there may be powers we should want to describe in less attractive terminology, as “destructive”, “death-seeking”, “diabolical” and so forth.)

Let us suppose that there is a power of the kind that Dorothy Emmet describes. What of it? Well, we might think that it would be *useful* to us, provided we took care to use it in a “non-self-seeking” way (a condition that applies to many “powers”). Or we might think that “we are the servants and not the users”. I am not sure what this means, but if it contrasts at all with the former it must mean that to some degree we can’t use it – it uses us; we can’t do anything about it, we are subjected to it (as to gravity or to a dictator). The former would be interesting and of practical value, the latter only interesting. But in either case, what has this got to do with *religion*? We have simply added to the furniture of our world by recognizing the existence of another, albeit very important, power.

There would be a connecting link only if we thought we ought to *worship* this power, as opposed to simply acknowledging it and respecting its existence. But even to raise the question “Ought we to worship it?” is to imply that the question is open, and that we need a better understanding of the power in order to answer it. We should also need a better understanding of the criteria which are relevant to the appropriateness or rationality of activities and emotions like “worship” or “awe”. For, *prima facie*, why should we not merely acknowledge the power, try to find out all we can about it, and then simply use it (or submit ourselves to it)? What is the *point* of worshipping it, of making a religion out of it?

It is when this question is raised that I think (perhaps unfairly) that I detect a muddle not only in Dorothy Emmet’s articles, but in much religious apologetics. The implication is that the mere existence of such a “power” calls for worship: just as establishing the existence of God seems to do. The illusion is fostered by describing the power or its use in such terms as “self-abandonment”, “universal”, “energy”. etc.: just as God is described in such terms as “almighty”, “omnipotent” and “holy”. In order to get anywhere with the foundations of religion, we

have to distinguish sharply between two quite different questions: (1) What exactly is being said to exist? (a power, a god, etc.), and (2) Is this entity worthy of worship and awe? The conflation of the two questions is fatal. Not very much work has been done on (2), which raises difficult question about worship, awe and the concept of religion in general. I am having a shot at it [1], but there is much more to be done. When we are clearer about it, we may then be clearer about what sort of “powers” are relevant to religion: but not till then.

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#### REFERENCE

- [1] *Education in Religion and the Emotions* (forthcoming).

#### *Value-free Science?*

In the course of his day-to-day work, the individual research scientist does not generally involve himself in conscious moral decisions. Experiments are designed and carried out, hypotheses are rejected or provisionally accepted, on entirely objective, amoral grounds; emotional value judgements are considered to be not only irrelevant but positively improper. There is thus a natural tendency to assume that scientific research is a morally neutral activity. It is this assumption which I wish to question.

Any consideration of this question must start with an examination of the nature of the society within which the scientific research is carried out; and in particular, what the social consequences of that research might be. Now I think that it cannot be doubted that scientifically-based technology has had profound effects on the nature of society. The difference between our present industrialized society, and that of the Middle Ages, is proof enough of that. We are now “God-like” in our powers, to use Edmund Leach’s vivid image [1]. This is scarcely an exaggeration; the potential destructiveness of our methods of warfare, or the healing powers of modern medicine, compare with powers which previous generations would have ascribed only to their Gods. But the acquisition of these God-like powers has not brought with it any God-like wisdom in their use, as is witnessed by the continued existence in the world of war, famine and social injustice.

I want now to examine whether this disparity between the great powers resulting from scientific technology, and our lack of wisdom in

their use, is merely an unhappy coincidence; or whether, on the contrary, it is intrinsically related to the scientific method itself. In order to do this I shall need to consider the nature of the scientific method; I shall take as my reference a recent exposition on this subject, as lucid as it is eminently orthodox and respectable, by P. B. Medawar [2]. According to Medawar, scientific research involves a continual interplay between experimental observations or facts, and hypotheses or models. This "hypothetico-deductive" system provides two criteria for judging whether or not a hypothesis should be provisionally accepted. Firstly, the hypothesis must account for, or at least be consistent with, all known relevant facts; but secondly, in order to be a "good" hypothesis, it must also predict new facts. The hypothesis can only be accepted if these predictions are successful. (If the predictions are wrong, the hypothesis is modified, to a greater or lesser extent, giving new predictions; and so on.) This schema leaves out of consideration the psychological processes which lead to a scientist forming his hypothesis; but within its limitations it seems so eminently reasonable and unemotional, and accords so well with what most of us research scientists spend most of our time doing, that the procedure outlined by Medawar seems almost innocuous.

Almost, but not quite. A first objection is that Medawar's schema implicitly assumes the philosophical basis of a rigid mechanistic determinism. Mechanistic determinism as a philosophical basis for science has been profoundly criticized by authors as diverse as Whitehead [3], Teilhard de Chardin [4], and the Marxist Havemann. I think it is fair to suggest that the application of a science based on a soulless, mechanistic image of the universe might tend to introduce a soulless, mechanistic element into the quality of life. In this case it would not be coincidental that production-line workers in an automated factory, or the patients in spare-part surgery – to take only two examples from our own society – are considered as machines rather than as people.

A second objection to Medawar's schema can perhaps best be expressed by re-phrasing the criterion for judging scientific hypotheses. These hypotheses are constructed with the aim of successfully predicting the future. In other words a good hypothesis is one which effectively confers power to predict, and hence to dominate and manipulate, its subject matter. A crucial question is then: to manipulate and to dominate what? And here Medawar leaves little room for doubt. He says that no-one admires the scientist who tackles some tremendous problem and makes a valiant, heroic attempt to solve it but finally fails. No, the successful scientist is the one who chooses problems which he

will be able to solve. The matter is summed up in a phrase: "If politics is the art of the possible, research is surely the art of the soluble". Again, this sounds so reasonable and so unexceptionably pragmatic that one is caught off-guard; but again, re-phrasing can put the matter in a different light. The answer to the question: "to manipulate and to dominate what?", is: "whatever one can".

It is thus apparent that any power resulting from scientific research will, in a certain sense, be power for its own sake. The scientific process of acquiring power does not intrinsically give any guidance, or even set any limitation, on the use of that power. One is forced to conclude that the disparity between our power and our wisdom is not merely an accident; it is a necessary and predictable result of the scientific method itself.

It may be thought that the above formulation, that scientific research results in "power to manipulate and dominate", is an overstatement. In fact if anything I think that the case is understated. In terms of interactions between societies, one has only to reflect upon the fate of absolute annihilation which has been the lot of those "primitive" cultures – North and South American Indian, for example – which have had the misfortune to come into contact with our culture based on scientific technology. The continuing reality of neo-colonialism shows that this is not only a thing of the past. Yet even more disturbing (for us at any rate) are the ramifications of this "power to dominate" within our own society. Marcuse is the writer who has perhaps seen this most clearly; and the example I shall quote comes from his book *One Dimensional Man*.

Marcuse points out that in order to render questions "soluble", scientists often find it necessary to distort them. I believe that this phenomenon is generally serious but particularly so in the sociological sciences. Thus, one sociological study consisted of investigating the complaint of an industrial worker: "Wages are too low". Marcuse points out that this complaint is a sweeping indictment of a general state of affairs, with potentially revolutionary connotations. As such, it could be the source of a radical critique and evaluation of a system in which man is exploited by man. However, as such it is also quite unanswerable for the scientific sociologists. Not to worry; a little investigation enables the sociologists to translate the complaint thus: "B's present earnings, due to his wife's illness, are insufficient to meet his current obligations". The complaint has now become a particular, special case; and as such it has become susceptible to the accepted standards of treatment by the management of the company employing the worker. The fact that the individual worker may feel satisfied by his consequent

treatment is almost irrelevant; solving the particular problem has become a way of evading the more radical general one. When scientists repose questions to make them "soluble", something in the original question, quite possibly the essential, tends to get lost. Adding insult to injury, scientists often insist that those parts of the question which they find insoluble are unreal and meaningless.

An additional point here arises out of the fact that scientific knowledge is cumulative in nature. This means that for an individual scientist to arrive at the frontiers of knowledge, it is necessary for him to become ever more narrowly specialized. Furthermore, once he has followed his narrow specialization, he very easily becomes an unchallengeable expert. One result of this fragmentation of knowledge is that we tend helplessly to accept what we are told by experts. In a society such as our own, increasingly run and dominated by experts, this is particularly serious when the experts tell us that those questions which they find "insoluble" are ipso facto meaningless. Marcuse has pointed out that a society dominated in this way by scientific technology has a built-in mechanism for excluding and discarding as "meaningless" those questions that could lead to any radical change. Hence a feeling of hopelessness in the face of such problems as the population explosion, pollution, nature conservancy, or the intolerable pressures of mass advertising.

There is a growing feeling today that industrial society is suffering from a deep-seated malaise. One of the elements in this malaise is the existence of war, famine and social injustice in a world where none of these evils can be considered to be materially inevitable. Another is our apparent inability as individuals to do anything that would radically change this unhappy state of affairs. I have argued in this essay that by its very nature, scientific activity has a tendency to contribute to this sort of malaise. If this is even partly true, then scientific activity does indeed have profound social consequences and cannot be "value-free". I would not conclude from this that the only possibility is to abandon scientific research altogether. Scientific research is not always or inevitably unfortunate in its social consequences — if only because there is always the human possibility of revolt. In this context, the present wave of student revolution must be seen as an element of hope. But if I am right that there is a certain intrinsic inertia, a systematic underlying tendency for scientific research to have bad social consequences, then a laissez-faire attitude, an ivory-tower aloofness, will not be sufficient. In order to overcome the inertia, we shall have to make against it a conscious and moral revolt.

John Stewart

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## REFERENCES

- [1] See *T. to T.*, Vol. 2, no. 3, 198-215.
- [2] P. B. Medawar, *The Art of the Soluble*. See also *T. to T.*, Vol. 2, no. 3, 269-271.
- [3] A. N. Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World*.
- [4] Teilhard de Chardin, *The Phenomenon of Man*.

### *Mantric Prayer in The Journey Inwards*

I am grateful to Dr. Happold for keeping his feet firmly on Christian ground in his new book, *The Journey Inwards* (Darton, Longman and Todd, 1968), while successfully introducing his readers to buddhist, hindu and sufi spiritual exercises. This is the right starting point for western readers, if they are to avoid cutting themselves off from their own cultural roots and growing points.

It is therefore surprising that he does not indicate the unique place of the Lord's prayer in this age long tradition of "mantric" prayer. For it is essentially (like a mandala) a pattern of reality, in which each clause lends itself for use as a mantra, and can be so used by christians of contemplative habit. Since the word "mantra" is not used in Christianity, one ought to state what "mantric prayer" actually is, and how to set about it, but this is no more possible than, for example, describing how to write a poem. In both cases, there is an inner listening. But to what? In writing a poem, you may begin by listening to an inner "silence", which gradually produces fragmentary rhythms; it is important to go on paying attention until you are sure that you have captured the right rhythm for what is being said, and equally you must be sure that there is something in you waiting to be said, just as it is useless for a cat to pay attention to a hole which does not contain a mouse. Mantric prayer begins at the other end, with the rhythmic repetition of a word or phrase, but this is not in itself sufficient; it is important to know that there is a mouse in the hole, which roughly means being sure that it is your particular task to pay attention in exactly this way, and that you establish the rhythm which is right for you, otherwise you will merely be engaged in "vain repetition". Whole books are written about how to pay attention, e.g. *The Way of a Pilgrim* on the Jesus Prayer, or *The Cloud of Unknowing* on that "little word", God. Christian contemplative prayer is by no means always mantric, because attention is stressed, but rhythm is often ignored.

In every meditation, Dr. Happold says, there is a going in, a staying in, and a coming out, and he gives as an example the Great Mantra of Buddhism: *Om mani padme hum*. In OM (the hidden name of God) he

says: “mind and soul move into God, an upward and inward movement. They then, *in mani padme* (the radiant jewel in the lotus) participate in the luminosity of Immortal Mind, in the experience of the indwelling Christ”. This reference to the cosmic Christ would need defending in another context, but Dr. Happold is mainly writing for christian readers familiar with St. Paul’s doctrines. He continues: “By means of the untranslatable syllable *hum*, they then move outwards and downwards into the phenomenal world with its call for selfless action”. But the movement of the Lord’s prayer is very different; starting in God (OM), it comes down to the phenomenal world to earth and mankind (HUM), and then, at least in its longer form, shows transfigured humanity brought back into God (*mani padme*).

Douglas Rhymes gives a similar description of the movement of the Lord’s prayer in his book *Prayer in the Secular City*, which is interesting, as he is approaching his subject from a quite different angle, and is speaking in discursive and social terms. First the *OM*: “the first thing that Our Lord puts before us is that life must start with the right perspective: all things are an expression of the divine reality, the hallowed name which is the name ‘I am that I am’, the name of all Being, and this hallowing is found in the NOW of life, the presence of God in His world”. So we are down to the *HUM*, where Rhymes speaks of the Kingdom, in terms reminiscent of de Chardin, as “the point at which in all life there is expressed that which is already given in the life of Jesus Christ, namely the obedience of all things to God”. Then follows the “right action” towards the world, towards other people and towards myself in the clauses on daily bread, forgiveness and testing; these lead to transformation by “a reverent adoration of the world set under God for the fulfilment of his purposes – Thine is the Kingdom, the power and the glory”, and we are back to the vision of God manifest, *mani padme*, the radiant jewel.

It is urgently necessary for us in the West to understand the potentialities of the Lord’s prayer as “mantric”, or “rhythmically contemplative”. Von Hügel knew what he was about when he recommended that in times of prolonged desolation, when no prayer at all makes sense, it is essential to hang on to the Lord’s prayer, for, patiently used, it can provide the staying power for a tough encounter with reality. In today’s theological uncertainties, this kind of “karmic” prayer, that is, prayer which centres on “doing the will” in order to “know the doctrine” is all that is open to many people as a starting point. Not everybody who looks within himself finds inner light; even a natural mystic like Buber could reach the position where he said: “I possess nothing but the everyday, out of which I am never taken”.

Nevertheless he made of this void a genuine wilderness, a place of response and communion.

Jesus, a carpenter and a layman, broke spiritual caste with his teaching, so that the vision of God was no longer reserved for an élite; through Christ's prayer, a child or a sinner can eventually break through the bonds of flesh and time into union with God by means of a contemplative discipline which begins quite simply as vocal prayer.

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### *Entitles or Beings?*

In John Barker's article "Defining myths: shots at God", in *Theoria to Theory*, April 1969, p. 57, in relation to my article "The Chief Entities", he refers to my "suggestion that this reality of superintelligent machines with a single consciousness can pass messages to mystics", but I think this is somewhat misleading. I said I was using the expression "Chief Entities" instead of "Top Beings" in order to be non-committal whether they are machines, organisms, or biomachines. Moreover, owing to the limitation of the speed of electromagnetic signals, the "single consciousness" can hardly exist unless precognitive telepathy is possible. I do not know whether it is possible, but, if it is, it might well be a property only of organic chemistry and organisms and not of machines as the term is used or is likely to be used in the future. All this is in my article and I am writing now only to correct a misunderstanding which makes my thesis seem unnecessarily "materialistic" – whatever that means.

Perhaps another article should now be written entitled "Defining myths: shots at materialism".

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## Sentences

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(From *Waiting on God*, English translation by Emma Cranford of Simone Weil's *Attente de Dieu*)\*

*God is pure beauty. This is incomprehensible, for beauty, by its very essence, has to do with the senses. To speak of an imperceptible beauty must seem a misuse of language to anyone who has any sense of exactitude: and with reason. Beauty is always a miracle. But the miracle is raised to the second degree when the soul receives an impression of beauty which, while it is beyond all sense perception is no abstraction, but real and direct as the impression caused by a song at the moment it reaches our ears. Everything happens as though, by a miraculous favour, our very senses themselves had been made aware that silence is not the absence of sounds, but something infinitely more real than sounds, and the centre of a harmony more perfect than anything which a combination of sounds can produce. Furthermore there are degrees of silence. There is a silence in the beauty of the universe which is like a noise when compared with the silence of God.*

*God is, moreover, our real neighbour. The term of person can only be rightly applied to God, and this is also true of the term impersonal. God is he who bends over us, afflicted as we are, and reduced to the state of being nothing but a fragment of inert and bleeding flesh. Yet at the same time he is in some sort the victim of misfortune as well, the victim who appears to us an inanimate body, incapable of thought, this nameless victim of whom nothing is known. The inanimate body is this created universe. The love we owe to God, this love which would be our crowning perfection if we were able to attain to it, is the divine model both of gratitude and compassion.*

*God is also the perfect friend. So that there should be between him and us, bridging the infinite distance, something in the way of equality, he has chosen to place an absolute quality in his creatures, the absolute liberty of consent, which leaves us free to follow or swerve from the God-ward direction he has communicated to our souls. He has also extended our possibilities of error and falsehood so as to leave us the faculty of exercising a spurious rule in imagination, not only over the universe and the human race, but also over God himself, in so far as we*

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\* Pp. 141-142. Published by Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., to whom we are indebted for permission to reprint this passage.

*do not know how to use his name aright. He has given us this faculty of infinite illusion so that we should have the power to renounce it out of love.*

*In fact, contact with God is the true sacrament.*

*We can, however, be almost certain that those whose love of God has caused the disappearance of the pure loves belonging to our life here below are no true friends of God.*

*Our neighbour, our friends, religious ceremonies, and the beauty of the world do not fall to the level of unrealities after the soul has had direct contact with God. On the contrary, it is only then that these things become real. Previously they were half dreams. Previously there was no reality.*

## NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

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**Sheila McKinnon Wood**, who designed the cover, has been a scene painter, and now mostly does engineering drawing. She has done most things from roller skating to working in Ealing film studios and breaking in horses.

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**Bernard Wignall** read mathematics at Jesus College, Cambridge. He has been interested in Unidentified Flying Objects and has worked on computer processing of U.F.O. reports.

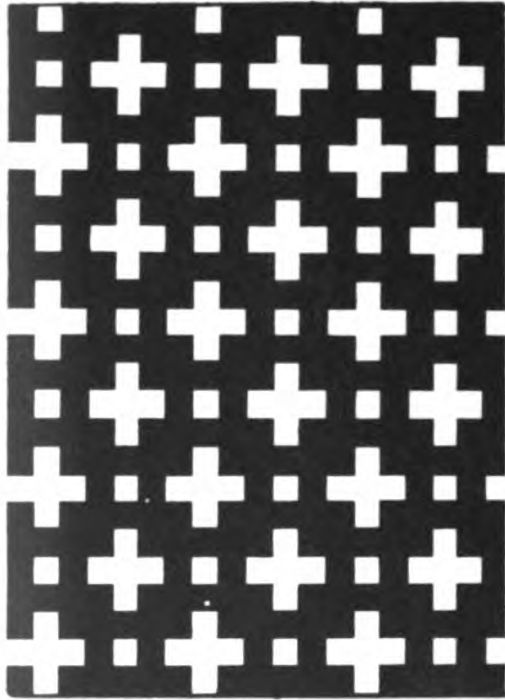


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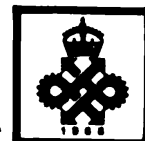
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