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Areas of Agreement: Teilhard de Chardin, A Critical Study

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One or two slips might be noted. Perhaps the modern spelling, Cebu, would be preferable to Sebu (p. 160), although the latter is found in a number of early manuscripts describing the Philippines. And the first permanent Spanish settlement in the Philippine Islands was begun in 1565, not 1564. Legazpi sailed from Navidad in November of 1564, but arrived in the Philippines in February of the following year.

Prof. Parry has provided students of that thrilling age of exploration and discovery with another magnificent piece of work. We can wholeheartedly agree with the statement on the jacket that "this book is an important contribution to historical scholarship, and at the same time an enthralling account of the greatest adventure in European history."

NICHOLAS P. CUSHNER

AREAS OF AGREEMENT

TEILHARD DE CHARDIN, A CRITICAL STUDY. By Olivier Rabut, O.P. New York: Sheed and Ward, 1961. 247 pp.

"Deep and inspiring, but occasionally ambiguous and exaggerated"—this about sums up Rabut's opinion of Teilhard's theory of evolutionary Christogenesis. There is no question in Rabut's mind of the validity of Teilhard's fundamental insight. Nor of its moving beauty. But as a professional theologian, Rabut feels bound in conscience to purge the work of any errors or dangers lurking among the truths. The book is faithful to its promise to be critical. This is a comfortable assurance to the reader that those areas where Rabut agrees with Teilhard may safely be assumed to be correct.

That these areas of agreement are wide comes as a pleasant surprise to this reviewer. Even more pleasing is the evidence of Rabut's urgent desire to develop the Teilhardian ideas within the theological noosphere, a development which Teilhard studiously avoided in his *Phenomenon Man*. Rabut regrets this avoidance, and calls on theologians to form research teams dedicated to the exploration of the theological break-throughs suggested by Teilhard.

Rabut offers an attractive piece of creative speculation: Stimulated by a footnote of Teilhard's, he discusses a question: Will this super-organism, the natural culmination of centuries of unification and personalization, use its freedom to cry out with Lucifer "I will not serve"? According to Rabut, what is guaranteed by Christian doctrine is the

success of the *supernatural* Pleroma; the natural superorganism will still be free to choose evil. The terrifying consequences of human freedom are thus revealed in a new cosmic dimension.

Rabut warns us on the following points: Instead of Aristotle's term "immanence", Teilhard uses the term "psychism", and this without distinguishing between rational, sentient and vegetative immanence. He implies that "radial energy", which is an effect of evolution, may also be its cause. He suggests that the unity of the evolving super-organism is of a physical kind. He seems to identify evolution with advance towards consciousness. He philosophizes, and yet professes to be strictly scientific. He fails to emphasize the important distinction between nature and grace, between God the Creator and God the Sanctifier, between evolutionary progress and sanctity. He plays down the existence of evil. Above all, he fails to give due acknowledgement to his Pauline sources, and in their stead, substitutes an uncertain—though impressive—extrapolation from paleontology.

Rabut is quite right. A professional theologian would certainly hesitate over Teilhard's unorthodox vocabulary, his syllogistic structure and his selective idealization. However, this reviewer sees a *pastoral* intent in Teilhard's methodology, directed as it is to a definite flock. To this flock, he speaks in their own scientific vernacular. To minds who do not share the specialist's concern for theological niceties, Rabut may appear to be splitting semantic hairs. On this hypothesis of a pastoral intent, at least in *The Phenomenon Man*, almost all of Rabut's objections are answered. That is, all but one.

Would Teilhard's scientific audience look upon his phenomenological approach merely as a novel disguise for Christian dogma, without any merits of its own? If so, would the pastoral aim thus be frustrated? The empirical solution to this psychological problem may not be forthcoming for about another decade. In the meantime, Rabut has already blueprinted a good set of remedial measures.

VICENTE MARASIGAN