Christianity was led by Renaissance Popes who were "pagan in all but name."

Zaehner is perhaps best illuminated by being placed in juxtaposition to Bellah[7]. According to Bellah, we are being deluged by a new religiosity in which "all believe something", and which achieves characteristic expression in a free, personal, symbolisation of life, forming and reforming kaleidoscopically: a Protestant vision. According to Zaehner, modernity is characterised by materialistic apathy (and not by some putative metamorphosis of religion whereby all believe something). He notes what Bellah largely ignores. The Eastern sources of free, personal, symbolisation are threatened by an Ideology—and it is far from tolerant and pluralistic in the presumed modern manner, namely the integrating, dogmatic, bibliolatrous creed of Marxism, Zaehner is, of course, also interested in contemporary semi-Eastern cults of experience. But whether they are "religious" or not depends once again on criteria. He argues that the search for the "other God" within may be a return to the undifferentiated pre-social self, or to a cosmic identification with the All, or to a theistic mysticism. Discussion of "secularisation" in the modern era depends (as it does in all periods) both on a careful categorisation of the phenomenon under consideration and a careful statement of what criterion of secularity is being employed. As Thomas' account of the sixteenth century suggests: Does the revival of the ancient Babylonian science of Astrology (spreading downward from the élite) count as part of the secularity of that time? The mere fact that its scientific premises were wrong does not classify it as "religion", nor does the fact that many Christian people also believed it.

I hope I have at least suggested that so-called Secularisation is one of those problems where our sociologists run up against conceptual difficulties. If Mr Pratt is any indication, the philosophers can (or will) do little to help them. When a conceptual problem of unusual complexity is crossed with the problem of the shape or movement or direction in history, the difficulty is compounded. Of course there are identifiable long-term trends, *e.g.* the differentiation of church and state. But to label a whole variety of such trends as "secularisation" is to distort the complexity of human affairs within a concept which is obviously both incoherent and contradictory.

[7] See R. N. Bellah, "Religious Evolution", *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 29, 1964.

Miss Nott's Indictment

By Maurice Cranston

MISS KATHLEEN NOTT'S two recent books offer a spirited indictment of contemporary Anglo-Saxon philosophy, both in the academic and in the popular sense of the word. In *Philosophy and Human Nature*[1] she criticises the kind of scientific empiricism which is dominant in so many universities. In a *Soul in the Quad*[2] she criticises the scientific humanism which has become an increasingly fashionable *Weltanschauung* among educated people generally. In both books she pleads for another style of philosophy, and one which has been better preserved on the continent than in England or America, a style which admits no gulf between explanation and prescription, or between technical philosophy and *Weltanschauung*, and which fuses the concerns of the professional philosopher with those of the ordinary man.

Miss Nott is, of course, a poet as well as a philosopher, and her books can well be seen as a plea for the sovereignty of poetry as opposed to the sovereignty of science. She does not object to science as such, but rather to

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[1] *Philosophy and Human Nature*. By KATHLEEN NOTT. Hodder and Stoughton, £2.75

[2] *A Soul in the Quad*. By KATHLEEN NOTT. Routledge, £3.15

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that attitude towards science which has been characteristic of Anglo-Saxon empiricism since the time of Francis Bacon. For Bacon was the first to proclaim the idea that science could save us as well as the idea that science consists of the organised observation of the regularities in nature. The first of these Baconian ideas inspires scientific humanism, which Miss Nott suggests is less a form of humanism than of humanitarianism, since its goal is the postponement of death and the diminution of human misery. Her objection to it is that it mistakes information for knowledge, and utility for morality. The second Bacon idea, that science rests on induction, leads to the conclusion that the speculative knowledge of metaphysics is not knowledge at all. Hence the philosopher who subscribes to Baconian empiricism has no option other than *harakiri*; for philosophy is eliminated from everything except the servile role of providing a "grammar of science", which the scientist does not want.

Other writers have challenged the sovereignty of science, but Miss Nott's books stand out because they are based on a thorough knowledge of what has been done in recent years in academic philosophy and in general scientific theory, so even those readers who are not persuaded by her argument will at least acquire a good inkling of what the behaviourists, psycho-analysts, linguistic philosophers, ethical evolutionists and the rest of us are up to. She is, at the very least, a marvellous teacher, with a witty tongue and a powerful cane, and one cannot help feeling sometimes rather sorry for the worthy liberal and progressive backsides on which her blows fall. Are they not, after all, a harmless crowd?

Miss Nott very clearly does not think so. And one of the reasons is that she is herself a humanist in a different—and older-established—sense of the word "humanist" than are her victims: that is to say, she is (in the words of the dictionary) one "devoted to the studies which promote human culture." She believes in the classical tradition which Bacon wished to overthrow. And she is disturbed by the presence in the Baconian tradition of a fierce element of philistinism (the contribution, I believe, of Locke rather than of Bacon himself), which detests poetry and the useless arts, and hates to waste its thoughts on things that cannot be empirically verified and measured. Miss Nott shows very effectively how this "scientific humanitarianism" ends up with a conception of man either as a machine or as a kind of complicated rat.

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THE ALTERNATIVE TRADITION in philosophy to which Miss Nott appeals is, as she explains it, the tradition "whose standard of reality is the way the world has been looked at and thought about and described and accounted for by real human beings." And real human beings, she goes on to say, have to live and choose, to face moral problems, and bear the responsibilities which flow from their freedom. This experience and this engagement, she suggests, "seeks a language which . . . expresses its universal concepts and claims in concrete terms, very often in images, or else aphoristically." It is at this point that Miss Nott moves from philosophy to poetry.

She is naturally sympathetic to Existentialism, at least in its earlier forms, when even Sartre himself spoke of literature as being the most appropriate medium for formulating conceptions of existence and reality. But Miss Nott is disappointed with the later Sartre, who in turning to politics and social science has gone over to the ranks of those theorists who "think that everything can and ought to be made finally explicit." Miss Nott believes that the most important truths are precisely those which resist, or elude, clear and distinct utterance.

Miss Nott draws on both C. S. Peirce and Collingwood to adumbrate, if not fully to articulate, a type of philosophy which reaffirms the uniqueness of the human person, reclaims men's freedom from the determinism of the scientists, and which looks to a literary language, particularly a poetic one, to communicate most successfully those few insights and glimpses of reality which our experience affords us. In short Miss Nott's two vigorous and stimulating books, being mainly critical, point to a third in which we may hope that she will one day set out in greater detail the speculative and constructive features of her own kind of humanism. The empiricist philosophers have robbed us of Mind and Self and virtually everything but movement: Miss Nott promises to give us back something we had almost forgotten we possessed, a soul.

The Moralists

Values & Choices—By G. J. WARNOCK

TO READ THESE EIGHT BOOKS in fairly rapid succession—none bad, some admirably good—is an unnerving experience. Somehow all recognisably belong to the same subject; but the view from the window, so to speak, changes utterly from one stage to the next—from desert to icefield, midland suburb to tropical jungle—with correspondingly sharp and extreme changes of temperature; and at times one view makes one doubt one's recollection of another. Perhaps most philosophical landscapes have something of this Protean instability, but on this score moral philosophy must surely lead the field. No doubt that is why some philosophers regard it with abhorrence.

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Mr Hudson's book[1] offers a usefully comprehensive introduction and dwells resolutely in temperate climes (with some tendency to dryness). But even here issues will not quite stand still to be scrutinised. We seem at first to be concerned with problems about *language* —are moral judgments emotive, prescriptive, descriptive?—or about *logic*—can "is"-propositions entail "ought"-propositions? But are we? The claim that moral language is emotive has a tendency to turn into a disquieting thesis about people—that people do not have reasons for their judgments or do things for reasons, but are interlocked with others in obscure emotional conflicts in which no one is right or wrong, but the stronger wins. It is possible, as Professor Williams and others argue in Mr Casey's collection,[2] to construe emotivism as merely part of a less radical doctrine; but if

[1] *Modern Moral Philosophy.* By W. D. HUDSON. Macmillan, 75p

[2] *Morality and Moral Reasoning.* Edited by JOHN CASEY. London, Methuen, £2.50; New York, Barnes & Noble, $8.80

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