

Book Reviews

STUART F. SPICKER (editor), *Organism, medicine and metaphysics. Essays in honor of Hans Jonas on his seventy-fifth birthday (10 May 1978)*, Dordrecht and Boston, Reidel, 1978, 8vo, pp. xxvii, 330, Dfl.65.00/\$24.50.

The seventh volume of the monograph series in Philosophy and Medicine honours Hans Jonas, Emeritus Professor of Philosophy at the New School for Social Research in New York City. Although much of Jonas's own scholarship has been devoted to gnosticism and other aspects of philosophical theology, in recent years he has written widely on the ethical and philosophical dimensions of modern medicine, technology, and biology. This collection of essays, by friends and former students of Jonas, addresses this latter cluster of issues.

The book is divided into three sections, each roughly concerned with one of the themes identified by the title. Historians of medicine will be most interested in the first section, labelled 'Humanity, history, and medicine'. Some of the papers, such as Stuart Spicker's discussion of euthanasia, or Otto Guttentag's reflections on physicians' attitudes towards their patients, use historical examples to illuminate contemporary problems. Eric Cassell's engaging piece presents an actual case history in analysing the conflict which physicians frequently face when deciding between the competing demands of knowledge and patient care. Paul Oskar Kristeller's essay is wholly historical. He looks at the relationship between philosophy (especially Aristotelianism) and medicine in medieval and renaissance Italian universities. As Kristeller points out, Bologna University was unusual in having a single faculty of arts, philosophy, and medicine.

The essays of the second section, 'Philosophy of organism', use Jonas's work as lynchpins for developing holistic approaches to the life sciences. Aristotle, Kant, and Whitehead are three names which recur in the essays of Marjorie Grene, Charles Hartshorne, and Strachan Donnelley. The discussion of teleology and Darwin by Leon Kass is an attractively clear summary of a large literature, though Kass cannot be said to have added much that is original.

The final section, 'Science, infirmity, and metaphysics', is more strictly rigorous in the narrow philosophical sense. Most of the essays are expositions of phenomenological positions of mind, body, life, and death. However, Richard Kennington's essay on 'Descartes and the mastery of nature' is historically illuminating in linking the familiar Baconian notion of man as the master of nature with Descartes' own thought. An epilogue by the late Hannah Arendt (reprinted from her recent *Life of the mind*) rounds out this volume, which is an impressive testimony of the loyalty which Jonas has inspired during half a century's teaching and writing.

JOSEPH KASTNER, *A world of naturalists*, London, Murray, 1978, 8vo, pp. xiv, 350, illus., £7.95.

Mr. Kastner's book deals with American naturalists and their achievements, beginning with John Banister, who visited Virginia in 1678 to study and record its natural history. In the eighteenth century, when botany as a science and as an adjunct to medicine was in its heyday, experts were amazed and gratified by the variety of previously unknown plants and animals that they encountered. But it is the individuals who dominate this excellent book; their remarkable personalities and industry, their