



Kampus Koncern

by joel hansen

Butler on Chardin

The "Public Lecture Series" of the UPEI philosophy dept. commenced for 1974 on Monday, Feb. 4. Ken Butler, professor, delivered the oration on the notion of history & progress in the evolutionary theory advanced by Pere Teilhard de Chardin.

Teilhard's theory is highly controversial in that it involves a metaphysical (or hyper - physical as Teilhard would like) extension of certain observations of the operation of nature. Many scientists, including philosophers of science, have attacked this metaphysical involvement as theological interferences from Chardin's priestly career in the Roman Catholic Church.

Fundamentally, the theory runs like this: there are in nature, two fundamental operations, convergence and divergence; convergence or the structural ordering in nature has resulted in complexity consciousness while divergence or disordering of structures constantly asserts itself in the face of convergence resulting in death or finity for all that is structured. Man's role in this cosmic comedy is to strive for convergence and order in nature.

Teilhard also allows for emergence from convergence - divergence struggles of totally new and possibly advanced forms of complexity-consciousness. This suggests the history of man as the history of emergence, yet this is not necessarily linear thrust. At many points man runs counter to convergence through wars, etc.. The exact idea is more of a possibility theory -- man has the potentiality to emerge into a higher form but must, through choice and freedom, find the path to this emergence.

This somewhat simplified notion of Chardin's theory represents what I gleaned from the lecture. I must say that Prof. Butler (who, as Prof. Smitheram noted, is just inches away from obtaining his Ph. D.) used a

great deal of biological jargon well suited for a biology lecture but hardly appropriate for an open audience concerned primarily with the philosophical. Perhaps Butler could have passed out a guide to his lecture which could have included a series of definitions of the biological terminology to alleviate the communication gap. But even my wife, who majors in biological studies, was overwhelmed by the rapidness with which Butler proceeded. On leaving the auditorium (Duffy 206?, alas the freezer) she commented on the breadth of the lecture, "he could have read just any one of his sentences and there would have been enough meat to spark

debate." As it was, too many sentences were read, resulting in a general confusion throughout the audience.

I would ask those who have yet to deliver their lectures in this series to be more explanatory than Prof. Butler. Have pity on us poor ignorants who do not understand the jargon that philosophers use daily. Remember you are trying to communicate ideas. To communicate with people they must understand the language one is using.

However, laying this complaint aside, I would say the message did manage to get across after a lively question period after the end of the lecture.

Ineptitude at UPEI

Has anyone on this campus heard of the Ten Days for World Development campaign being instigated by the local Charlottetown High Schools? Well, if you haven't it is a campaign designed to increase the world consciousness of Islanders concerning the problems of underdevelopment on this planet.

I was amazed last Tuesday evening when on "Compass" (CBCT's evening information program), a student from Colnel Gray High delivered a speech on this subject of underdevelopment. His grasp of the situation was acute. He knew about the overseas investment game where a big country such as Canada invests in an underdeveloped country while strings are attached such as the gaining of monopolies for materials, etc. for Canada. This is our so called solution to the world underdevelopment problem -- "How naive" noted the high

school student. "There must be a radical awakening in Canadians towards this problem of underdevelopment around the world and how we all contribute to it," he claimed.

I agreed with all the student said. However, this article is not designed to foster agreement or disagreement on this subject, it is to point out the ineptitude of our own campus involvement. Why wasn't there a campaign instigated by UPEI? Certainly world and Island underdevelopment are topics we must be concerned with! Are they not?

I would say that the high schoolers have shown us up as the apathetic bums we are.

Three cheers for the high schools of Charlottetown for championing a truly noble cause -- assorted "boos" (not booze) for the lazy & uninterested UPEI students who have again sought comfort instead of challenge. (not Jordan's challenge)