NEW SHAPES OF REALITY: Aspects of A. N. Whitehead's Philosophy, by Martin Jordan. *George Allen & Unwin*, London, 1968. 184 pp. 35s. net.

I liked this bad book. It is a bad book, since it is not built in such a way as to achieve its declared aim, which is 'to assemble some of Whitehead's main ideas in such a way that the reader may be tempted to go further—perhaps to read books of greater authority, such as those listed in the bibliography, and then start on Whitehead's own works' (10 ff.). In fact, should the reader be tempted as sorely as St Anthony to go further he will find it unnecessarily difficult to do so. If the author's book is to serve as an 'introduction to more technical studies' (11), it should give leads to such studies. And it should give leads to appropriate passages in Whitehead's own works. It does not. (Well, hardly ever.) As 'a literary essay without footnotes' (11: there are a couple, in fact), it is of merely marginal use to the readers Mr Jordan expressly envisages, who would be much better served by reading Whitehead himself.

The first five chapters expound the world-view of Whitehead's later works—without considering seriously how this stands in relation to the earlier Whitehead—under the headings 'Interrelatedness', 'Occasions of Experience', 'Organic Relations', 'The Spacetime Continuum' and 'God'. The exposition is done fairly and often helpfully, but chapters 1 and 5 especially suffer from what looks like an insufficient awareness of not very *recherché* logical background. (Page 120 reads a little oddly: for a similar reason, one suspects.) The author alludes to the position of Mays on Whitehead's God and insists that 'Whitehead's God is available as both a secular and a religious concept' (170), but does not attempt to expound it as a 'secular' concept. Once again the reader is tempted to suspect that Mr Jordan's acquaintance with Whitehead's logical works, or his physical world, is not what it could be. Supporting substructure (e.g. braces for trousers or logical awareness for writing on Whitehead) need not show, but its absence tends to be noticeable.

In chapter 6 Mr Jordan explains why Whitehead chose the kind of language he did— to 'try to make true statements . . . in application to the universe as a whole' (147). This in turn leads to a discussion of what Whitehead held philosophy to be (i.e. not an exercise in expressing learned surprise that the kind of language developed for buying groceries will not necessarily do for other occasions). In the remaining chapter the author gives more personal judgments on the philosophy of Whitehead, describing his (the author's) own position as 'one of naive opposition to the anti-metaphysicians' (161 ff.). He suggests that Whitehead's 'societies' and 'nexus' could be useful tools of analysis in linguistic, moral or even technical problems (the English Channel Tunnel is mentioned in this last connexion) not raised by Whitehead himself. (While this is no doubt true, it should not be overlooked that any one of the problems suggested for this treatment could probably be organized equally well in other terms free of the awesome categoreal commitment of Whitehead's language.) In this chapter, too, the author sees similarities between Whitehead's God and the God of Christian belief. (But is it helpful to describe either position as 'theistic', as Mr Jordan does?) He maintains that 'the most disquietive thing about Whitehead's theology . . . is neither more nor less than the abnegation of human freedom' (173). The reason for this is that 'creative advance is not a human adventure. It is God's adventure. . . . There is no chance of God saving any entity except himself' (173 ff.). (An objection of this sort should probably be made to Whitehead, but the precise form in which Mr Jordan objects would not seem to hold unless (a) freedom equals unpredictability, which the author dismissed in an earlier chapter, and (b) God can be 'simply located', which Whitehead would not allow.)

Mr Jordan gives a 'select bibliography'. As is quite proper, only those works of Whitehead from the period in which the author is interested are given: yet an 'introduction' should also say where a complete list can be found. It is not enough to say 'Almost any library will offer a list' of the earlier works. The bibliography of books *about* Whitehead's philosophy is offered without comment: which is also unhelpful in an introduction. There is, however, a useful index. Presentation is good and proof-reading has been careful, though a misspelling of 'salutary' remains on page 31 and the author of *Lolita* appears under what looks like an assumed name, both in text and index. A remark on St Thomas Aquinas (129) is ambiguous. And Whitehead was in Harvard some thirteen years before retiring (11).

Mr Jordan's enthusiasm for Whitehead comes through the book, though not always in a manner calculated to effect 'the promotion of enthusiasm in others' (11). I myself rather enjoyed reading the book, but it does not con-

tribute anything of importance to the under-
standing of Whitehead, and is too unco-opera-

tive with its readers to serve as the 'introduction'
it seeks to be.

LAWRENCE MOONAN

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY, by Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann. *Allen Lane The Penguin Press*, London, 1967; reprinted 1969. 249 pp. 50s.

Berger and Luckmann have written what they
call 'A Treatise in the Sociology of Know-
ledge', an introduction to an area and an
approach in sociology that has received
relatively little attention since the crucial work
of Weber on the concepts of 'social action' and
'Verstehen', with the notable exception of
Mannheim. The ritual homage that the social
sciences have paid to the natural sciences has
too long left us trying to cope with the com-
plexities of social interaction in terms of
mechanical models that even natural science
no longer finds so appropriate. Even now there
is a fascination in the 'real' data of statistics
that tends to hold spellbound many sociologists,
and leave explanation as a non-starter (what
does it *mean* to say that 'people moving from
working to middle class with increasing
affluence show conservative political affilia-
tions'?). Now, the work of a few phenomeno-
logists with interests in the social sciences,
particularly Schutz and Merleau-Ponty, has
led to a much better appreciation of the value of
looking at the intentional frameworks that
people use, and the way in which they con-
stitute their perception of the world—indeed,
the way in which they construct reality. *The
Social Construction of Reality* represents the first
introductory text to this basic field.

I suspect that this is one of those many books
that fall into the category of 'glorious failures':
'glorious' because it is a book that covers a
vast area of relatively 'new' material for most
social scientists, and does so in a systematic and
coherent way; 'failure' because it is far too
ambitious, and tends to slip towards a generality
that says nothing. But failure is too strong a
word; this is a book that tantalizes, and makes
you hope for more. It tends to be written in a
slightly 'journalistic' style, much like Peter
Berger's earlier, and excellent, *Introduction to
Sociology*, but nonetheless makes its points well
and opens up a rich vein.

The book is in three main parts, after a
historical introduction, and the first of these, on
'The Foundations of Knowledge in Everyday

Life', is really excellent in presenting a résumé
of the phenomenological approach to social
interaction. It obviously owes a great debt to
Schutz, whose *Die Strukturen der Lebenswelt*
Luckmann is translating, though the interested
reader should really look at some of Schutz's
own work himself, particularly the theoretical
papers in *Collected Papers*, Vol. I, and some of
the studies in Vol. II. The second section, on
'Society as Objective Reality', is also good,
but at times runs dangerously close to giving
too integrated a functional picture of society
by focussing on the sharing of symbolic
universes, semiotic systems, etc., and ignoring
the discontinuities and differentiations that
exist. But it is the third section that is the
weakest, on society as subjective reality, and
here the authors' own fields begin to obtrude,
since much of their material is inadequate to
the task they attempt. There is a notable lack
of reference to recent studies in perception and
cognitive frameworks, and even Festinger's
work on cognitive dissonance gets only two
passing references. Another lack is considera-
tion of the more recent work in linguistics.
Indeed, while criticisms are being made, there
is one other aspect of this book that is more
than a little annoying, and this is the deliberate
lack of reference, and the banishment of the
impoverished footnotes to the back of the book.
Berger and Luckmann inform us that this was
done to improve readability—but it simply does
not. I fear there is an element of inverted
one-upmanship here, and I see no reason why
we should want to deny our specialist interests
. . . though I suspect that a more crucial factor
may have been economics.

However, with these few criticisms made,
this is a book that everyone should look at.
A little determination will remedy the weak-
nesses, and I suspect that this is one field we
cannot afford to ignore. A good start, and I
look forward to further work from this team,
as well as to the completion of Luckmann's
translation.

PETER SHELDRAKE

GUILT: Theory and Therapy, by Edward V. Stein, *George Allen & Unwin*, London, 1968. 238 pp. 32s.

This is an invaluable book for the Christian
psychologist, sociologist and, perhaps above all,
for the confessor. Edward Stein sets out, after

half a life-time of research, as he himself says,
to discuss the origins and dynamics of guilt.
Guilt has bedevilled *homo sapiens* since first,