

ultimately revealed as "Being," then all existents are grounded in that immense realm of "Being" that reveals itself behind the veil of nothingness and that restores to man all things and beings, including his own *Dasein*. "Without Being there can never be any existent," says Heidegger. Being as such, however, is so far above and beyond all things that are that "it is without any existents" (*es west ohne das Seiende*). Here, it would seem (and Heidegger has confirmed this interpretation), the horizon opens toward the divine Being.

KURT F. REINHARDT.

*Stanford University,  
Stanford, California.*

***The New Renaissance of Spirit.* By Vincent A. McCrossen. New York: Philosophical Library, Inc., 1949. Pp. 252. \$3.00.**

Prof. McCrossen's book entitled *The New Renaissance of the Spirit* is a book primarily concerned with historico-cultural issues, and properly belongs to a class known as the "general culture series." It is a deeply Catholic book, and it is obvious that the author is thoroughly familiar with Catholic writings.

The book's main argument is that we are at the moment on the threshold of a new age. The passing world has been materialistic for the last five or six centuries, and we are now in the last stages of a materialistic culture. A new set of values is taking form, a new world is being born, and the new culture will be primarily spiritual. It will not be a new Middle Ages, but a new Renaissance. The materialistic values will be relegated to their proper place.

The author has certainly brought out very forcefully the dynamics of history: for example, the violent character attached to transition-periods, the creativity of the dying-periods, the optimism implied in the truly Christian concept of the world, the action of Divine Providence in human affairs. Professor McCrossen sees the new Renaissance of the spirit as being led principally by the same countries which were in the forefront of the Renaissance of the 14th-16th centuries. The protagonists of the new Renaissance are the great Catholic thinkers of the last fifty years. From France and Italy, the new movement will extend to the fringe countries of the Roman Empire, and finally to the countries which have embraced Christianity at a later date.

Actually the two most powerful nations of the world, Russia and the United States, are not in a position to be leading in the new Renaissance, since Russia is under the domination of Marxism, which is but the most extreme form of materialism, and the United States is engrossed in a bourgeois materialism already out-dated, but still sufficiently strong to be the guiding philosophy. Nevertheless, in this country at least, there are signs of dissatisfaction among the people, and even among some of the more advanced thinkers who have been able to break away from the more commonly accepted set of values.

This reviewer agrees with the main points outlined in the book. Nevertheless, he feels that certain weaknesses are to be found. Most likely they are due to the fact that it is practically impossible in a work of this kind to make all the required distinctions. The result is a tendency to unqualified statements, which may give the impression of being general condemnations or over-simplified explanations of highly complex historical situations. By way of illustration, it may be noted that the Renaissance is continually considered as being *sensate*. This is obviously true, but the materialistic aspect of Renaissance is not its only characteristic, and it is not its most important. The Renaissance is also a deeply spiritual phenomenon, in this sense at least, that it is not only a glorification of the *sensate* values.

The same may be said of the opposition between "*sensate culture*," and "*spiritual culture*." By the very fact that a culture is spiritual, it does not follow that it should be accepted. It may be "*non-sensate*" or "*anti-sensate*" and still be undesirable.

The frequent use of the word "*sensate*" is apt to bring confusion. The author should have given a definition or an explanation of the word. This was certainly called for, since the word "*sensate*" is a new word. I presume that it means "*materialistic*" or "*pertaining to the senses*," but its repeated use in different contexts is certainly confusing.

It would also have been very helpful if the author had clarified the distinction between the natural and the supernatural order. This should have been done in the light of Thomistic philosophy. A complete philosophy of culture is to be found in the writings of Aquinas, but it is being neglected.

Professor McCrossen's book will certainly be very helpful, and it will give new hope to those who think that a rebirth is impossible.

LUCIEN DUFALT, O. M. I.

*Oblate College and Seminary,  
Natick, Mass.*