

RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY

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began to abandon their belief in Satan.

Yet Satan has his place in the 20th century. Pelikan sees Satan as "a personification of evil," a way to explain such acts as the mass slaughter of Ukrainians under Stalin or Jews at Auschwitz. It was not the bureaucratic "banality of evil" that butchers such as Adolf Eichmann practised. These men were simply satanic, evil men whose crimes transcend their time.

We should not, however, follow the Manicheans and assume that Satan is as powerful as God. Human beings, Pelikan teaches, have free will and can freely choose either good or evil paths in the course of their lives. But beyond this world, "beyond the antitheses of light and darkness, good and evil, heaven and hell," lies the One Who Is, the Creator, who, for believers, will ultimately triumph.

Satan can thrive—and win converts—in a world where many doubt his existence. "Satan is quite happy to be what we still call a gray eminence," Pelikan concludes, "who can rule even if he does not reign."

*Explaining Stonehenge*

"Stonehenge: A New Theory" by Benjamin C. Ray, in *History of Religions* (Feb. 1987), Univ. of Chicago Press, P.O. Box 37005, Chicago, Ill. 60637.

Why was Stonehenge built? Historians through the centuries have suggested that Stonehenge was everything from a Druidic shrine to a temple to the Sun God. The most popular contemporary theory is that of Gerald Hawkins, who proposed in *Stonehenge Decoded* (1965) that Stonehenge was a gigantic calculator built to perform astronomical observations.

Ray, a professor of religious studies at the University of Virginia, argues that Hawkins failed to take into account the religious motivations of Stonehenge's builders. While Stonehenge was used for some astronomical purposes (such as determining the dates of solstices), "Hawkins was clearly wrong about Stonehenge's possible use as a calculating machine."

Hawkins believed that the "trilithons"—the pairings of two upright "sarsen" stones supporting a third "lintel" stone that form the central ring of Stonehenge—were positioned so that priests could see when the Sun and Moon were aligned in the sky. Because the Sun and Moon were aligned in 32 out of 240 possible positions, Hawkins concluded that Stonehenge was a finely tuned observatory.

Yet Stonehenge is less precise than Hawkins made it out to be. Astronomer Richard Atkinson found that even a random placing of trilithons in a circle would result in 48 alignments out of 240 positions. Moreover, the wide space between stones resulted in errors so large that Stonehenge can "hardly be said to indicate solar or lunar positions at all."

Stonehenge, Ray suggests, was built as a temple to communicate with the dead. Alignments were not "astronomically specific," but were perhaps placed so that rituals could be conducted when the Sun and Moon were "at their strongest moments." The trilithons were placed in a circle so as to "imitate in imperishable stone a great timber house," with "the vault of the sky" acting as a symbolic roof.

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Ray admits that much of his theory of Stonehenge's significance is speculation. "Any attempt to explain the function of the monument is necessarily interpretive," Ray concludes. However, "it is clear that the current astronomical interpretations are no longer viable, at least in their present form."

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**SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY**


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**Politics and  
Science**

"Science and Scientists in the Public Arena" by Edward Shils, in *The American Scholar* (Spring 1987), 1811 Q St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009.

Should science and politics mix?

Shils, a sociologist at the University of Chicago, believes that politics has corroded scientific thought by creating a "new world" where scientists increasingly doubt the traditional methods of conducting research.

In Shils's view, the politicization of science began when atomic bombs exploded over Nagasaki and Hiroshima in August 1945. After the explosions, Manhattan Project scientists Leo Szilard and Harold Urey campaigned to bring atomic weapons under international control. Their efforts convinced many scientists to support a variety of causes, ranging from the Pugwash meetings of the 1950s to environmental protests of the 1980s.

While scientists discovered politics, Congress and the White House saw



*Physicist Leo Szilard drafted Albert Einstein's 1939 letter to Franklin D. Roosevelt calling for development of the atomic bomb.*