

Reviews

ON THE ETERNAL IN MAN, by Max Scheler, translated by Bernard Noble; S.C.M. Press; 63s.

BEING AND TIME, by Martin Heidegger, translated by John Mcquarrie and Edward Robinson; S.C.M. Press; 84s.

It would be absurd to attempt any sort of serious review of either of these two books, which must be my excuse for noticing them together. Both of them are classics of German philosophy, both in their different ways critical moments of the phenomenological tradition which has so largely shaped the movement of thought on the Continent since the turn of the century. The influence of Scheler's book, first published in 1921, has been usefully traced by Heinrich Fries in *Die katholische Religionsphilosophie der Gegenwart* (Heidelberg 1948), from which it appears that at least no Catholic writer of any importance in the philosophy of religion has been able to avoid coming to terms with Scheler; it could almost be said that he invented the subject, and the problems raised by his invention are still unresolved. The English version here offered contains all the apparatus provided in the recent edition of the collected works, as well as an extract from Bochenski's book on contemporary European philosophy and several useful notes by the translator. The translation itself shows painstaking fidelity to the original, and can be confidently used by the serious reader.

The presentation of Heidegger's primary work is again admirable. The original of especially difficult passages is frequently quoted and commented on in footnotes; the pagination of the 8th German edition is provided in the margins; there is a glossary of German expressions (19 pages) and indices of English expressions (60 pages) and of Latin and Greek expressions. All this makes the present volume a valuable aid even to the German reader, especially if his own copy of *Sein und Zeit* belongs to one of the earlier editions. (Perhaps I may be allowed to refer here to the cheap and useful *Index zu Heidegger's 'Sein und Zeit'* compiled by Hildegard Feick, Tübingen 1961, with references to later works of Heidegger as well, prior to the two volumes of Nietzsche). One must simply say that this is the definitive presentation of Heidegger's fundamental work for English readers, and, so far as I know, the only complete translation into any language. Whether it is likely to make any sense to someone who cannot consult the German original is another matter.

A serious review of these two works, it was said, would be absurd; but it may not be out of place to raise one serious question, prompted in part by the series to which these two volumes belong, the SCM Library of Philosophy and Theology. The series is one only in name and presumably in intention; it divides sharply and easily into works belonging to the English philosophical

tradition (modern style) and those belonging to, or deriving from, a German tradition. There would seem to be little ground for supposing that contributors to the first sub-series ever read the volumes of the latter group. When someone in the modern English tradition can bring himself to read anything in the Continental tradition (Mr Warnock, reviewing Heidegger's *Introduction to Metaphysics in Mind*, or Fr Kenny reviewing Häring's *Law of Christ in The Life of the Spirit* are recent examples which come to mind) he betrays so profound a lack of sympathy and comprehension that one is surely forced to recognize here something more than a superficial difference of temperament or training, something which is itself problematic philosophically, a genuine possibility inherent in human intercourse with the world. The last phrase unmistakably identifies the present writer's sympathies; I find it uncomfortable to inhabit divided and distinguished worlds and openly declare myself a resolute supporter of English membership of an intellectual Common Market. But the problem remains and is not to be solved by 'translation', at least in the literal sense. What is the nature of the inhibition which prevents the vast majority of professional English philosophers today from taking Continental philosophy seriously? (The only exceptions I can think of at the moment are Professors Mackinnon, Hampshire and Findlay, and Miss Iris Murdoch; though it is curious to reflect that Professor Ryle reviewed *Sein und Zeit* at length and with respect in *Mind* in 1929.

Once again, it is absurd to raise so pregnant a question in a journalistic note. But it is not wholly unfair, perhaps, to find a clue to the answer, or more properly a hint of what investigations to pursue, in Heidegger's expression *Seinsvergessenheit*, with all its polemic edge. The expression is of course problematic, for Heidegger as well as for the sceptical English reader: what is this 'Being' which we are supposed to have lapsed, or thrown ourselves, into unawareness of? *Being and Time* can be read as an exposition of how English philosophy has cut itself off from its sources – its sources in 'Being'. It is not likely to be so read except by the already converted. Must we then commit ourselves to an allegiance: either expose the ontological inauthenticity of English philosophers or Heidegger's mistakes in logical grammar? As things stand, this last question must I am afraid be answered in the affirmative, the only qualification – an important one – being that things do not stand. 'As things stand' the present writer is finally not prepared to exclude from his philosophical attention everything which his experience as a Christian, thinking, moral human being has shown to be ultimately – and that is to say ontologically – serious; but one of the ingredients of that thinking experience has certainly been, and must necessarily be, that philosophical poise or stance which English philosophy has found a way of assuming in its internal debate with Hume. The precariousness of its poise is itself seductive: it allows the practitioner all the subjective tension of philosophical seriousness without the vulgarity of personal involvement. But because things do not stand, and there are manifest signs of discontent with this mandarin code (who would have expected to find Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception* in Professor Ayer's new International Library of Philosophy

and Scientific Method?), there is hope that someone, some day, not too long away, may be able to define the opposition less journalistically than in the present note, and so perhaps to resolve it: a suitably Hegelian cadence.

CORNELIUS ERNST, O.P.

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT, by Mannes Tidmarsh, O.P., J. D. Halloran and K. J. Connolly; Sheed and Ward; 10s. 6d.

The case for the abolition of capital punishment has been argued so often in recent years, and the relevant evidence has been quoted so confidently, that it might seem that the only thing that is needed now is effective political action to bring the change about. What is new about this tripartite study is its origin: the authors are Catholics, and as such they do not question a possible right of the State to take life in the interest of the common good (unlike such abolitionists as Victor Gollancz who repudiate the right in any circumstances): what they do question is the exercise of that right in England today as the appropriate punishment for murder.

Father Tidmarsh's opening essay on the ethics of punishment is an effective statement of the classical doctrine, and he does well to emphasize the need to inspect the pragmatic arguments against this consistent background. If punishment is at all reformative—and to confine its function to a retributive assertion of society's abhorrence of wrong is morally unacceptable and penologically disastrous—it is hard to see why murder alone should be thought to be outside the range of criminal behaviour in the sense that the penalty can achieve no element of reform. In fact the arguments of the retentionists are emotional ones, and understandably so since murder is so evidently abhorrent. But the emotions are poor counsellors where justice—to say nothing of mercy—is in question.

The debate today is concentrated on the argument that capital punishment is a unique deterrent, and Mr Halloran's essay is a thorough investigation of much familiar material, such as the evidence given before the Gowers Commission and the findings of Professor Sellin, which shows that there is no ground for supposing that the fact of execution affects the incidence of murder. The comparison of the rates in comparable American States—abolitionist and retentionist, such as Michigan and Illinois—over a number of years shows that whatever it is that influences the murderer it is certainly not the possibility of his being executed on conviction. The reason of course is that the majority of murders are not truly deliberate, and murderers are for the most part abnormal men. The argument for retention of the supreme penalty rests in practice on the evidence of its effectiveness as a deterrent, and this is now seen to be illusory.

Mr Connolly, in his essay on the psychological aspects of capital punishment, appears to think it necessary to justify psychology itself, and this he does in rather a laboured way. He has little difficulty in showing the irrationality of so much propagandist in favour of retaining—even of extending—capital punish-