

in spite of his minute size, acts with deliberation . . . that, though so small, it has been created with a body as perfect as that of the elephant . . . He also bids his readers consider the bee, etc." . . . Miss Smith is generous with citations.

Where she is least at her ease is in the chapter on al-Ghazali's influence, especially on his influence in the West. She is obviously a little out of her depths in the Christian middle ages; and a good deal of relevant and indispensable work has been done in the last fifteen years on the Arabic influence in the West which she does not appear to know.

KENELM FOSTER, O.P.

AN ESSAY ON MAN. By Ernst Cassirer. (Yale University Press; Humphrey Milford; 20s.).

Seldom does a reviewer meet with a book of such intellectual distinction as this last work of the late Professor Ernst Cassirer. The author drew upon the accumulated wealth of a lifetime's learning and thought. The result would, indeed, be too massive were it presented with less disarming humility and but for its dignified discernment of expression.

Cassirer wrote as a Kantian. According to him, man builds up his own universe of discourse—a universe of meaning. Whereas the animal's response is simply behaviouristic, it is man's prerogative to interpret experience according to symbols, by which he may universalize and objectify what must otherwise remain subjective only. His symbols are manifold; there is his sympathy, his *feeling* for every manifestation of life, and from this develops his universe of Myth and Magic and Religion; there is *Language* by which he stays and lays hold of a physical world; he creates, in his intuition of sensible appearances, *sensuous forms* of Beauty; he quickens even the experience of past generations by freeing it, in his own experience, from the objective *records* in which it is at once stilled and preserved to History; and by an achievement which is the highest and most characteristic to which he attains he perfects language, constructing symbolic systems of *number*, which is the key of Science to objective truth. And all this activity is united in the focus of the human capacity for meaning, a unity, therefore, functional rather than substantial. "We seek not a unity of effects but a unity of action; not a unity of products, but a unity of the creative process" (p. 78). So it comes about that "man is in a sense constantly conversing with himself. He has so enveloped himself in linguistic forms, in artistic images, in mythical symbols, or religious rites, that he cannot know anything except by the interposition of this artificial medium" (p. 25). This is man's achievement from which he cannot escape. Neither (we must add) can God escape. It is as if Man said: Be God made. And God was made. And Man saw that it was good. And Man went on, after that, to adorn his world with beauty and order and intelligibility.

Of course this is a humanism impossible to the Christian. But it presents a challenge. The Kantian philosophy (perhaps more profoundly atheist than Kant himself realized) upon which Cassirer builds, is one that closely rivals the *philosophia perennis* precisely because it does take serious account of both the ideal and empirical character of man's thought. Other philosophers stress one side or the other; Kantians and Aristotelians, for all their divergence of approach and conclusions, respect the same imperious demands, and their systems often correspond to each other, crux for crux, whilst yet standing on their own irreconcilable positions. Professor Cassirer opposes his own functionalism to the static substance of traditional thought. But it should not be forgotten (as the Cartesian reduction of material substance to inert extensity inclines us to forget) that, in fact, the Aristotelian and Thomistic theory of substance was, in a full sense, functional, a theory of the dynamic source of beingness, conceived, as the formal always must be, with reference to finality. I think the real opposition is rather that in the older tradition function was already objective, whilst for Cassirer as a Kantian it is itself the "creative process" which effects objectivity. This is the same as saying that traditionally God was the source of the world's intelligibility, whilst for Kant the source was the conscious subject, man. But two stark facts seriously inconvenience the latter interpretation, the facts of other selves and of self's extermination in death. For this reason it is significant that the present "Essay on Man" embraces neither evil (a partial extermination of self, which has much to do with other selves) nor death. There is pathos in this. Straited by evil and set around by death, one is put in mind of Pascal's complaint against philosophers: "How should they give remedies to your woes who have not so much as known them?"

COLUMBA RYAN, O.P.

THE CRITICISM OF EXPERIENCE. By D. J. B. Hawkins. (Sheed & Ward; 5s.).

Dr. Hawkins's analysis of sensation and perception proceeds by steps. Knowledge, in general, is of reality, not of phenomena; sensation of secondary qualities is of the real, but of the real only as in the sensing subject; we have, however, an immediate awareness, not exactly of primary qualities, but of mass or voluminousness in our own bodies, and also a like awareness of a "now" that is not a point but a unit of finite duration; we have also an immediate awareness of ourselves as individual existents and dynamically inclined agents; we have an immediate awareness of voluminousness external to our own bodies, thus perception of the external world. The conditions of such perception are parallel with those of memory in which we are immediately aware of past events; these conditions are (1) that there be present an image or sense datum like the past event or external object, (2) that this be caused by the past event or external object. (These are the conditions,