

ERANOS-JAHRBUCH, 1946, Band XIV: 'Geist und Natur', Herausgegeben von Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn (Zürich: Rhein-Verlag; 27.50 Swiss francs.)

'Eranos', we are told by Liddell and Scott, is Greek for 'a meal to which each contributes his share', and is equivalent to the Latin 'symbolum'. A more fitting name could not have been found for the conference of distinguished thinkers, scientists and scholars who, since 1932, have annually assembled on the shores of Lago Maggiore to relate the latest findings of their several disciplines and to discuss among themselves their wider human implications. The Eranos Annuals, which contain the proceedings of these conferences, supply a valuable epitome of the conclusions of modern research and the reflections thereon of those who actually undertake it. Each year a subject of general human concern is chosen, and each speaker is invited to contribute his own professional angle upon it.

In 1946 the subject chosen was 'Spirit and Nature'. Notwithstanding the great variety of speakers, and the absence of any common ideology, a remarkable unity of presentation emerges. The proceedings were opened by Professor Andreas Speiser with a paper on 'The Foundations of Mathematics from Plato to Fichte', a somewhat unexciting title which obscures the intense interest of his theme. With the aid of Plato and the neo-Platonists, he presents mathematics as a function of the human soul in its effort to reconcile the inner world of eternal Idea with the outer world of multiplicity and change; in its innate search for the One—and for God. He shows how this realisation of this therapeutic and religious function of mathematics has been lost since the early 18th century; how Newton and the brothers Bernoulli, by their discovery of the differential calculus and its consequent fruitful application to mechanistic technique, unwittingly prepared the way for the divorce of subject and object; how this in turn has led to the sterile opposition of Idealism and Materialism, with all its spells for human woe, notwithstanding the efforts of Goethe (by e.g. his *Farbenlehre*) to overcome this dangerous dualism.

Still earlier efforts to reconcile the 'spiritual' and the 'natural' in man are studied by Professor Karl Kerényi in an interesting paper of the 'Goddesses of Nature'. The Rev. Professor Karl Ludwig Schmidt follows with an exegetical lecture on the powers of Nature and of the Spirit according to St Paul. Then follow two papers on the problem as it has presented itself to the thinkers, story-tellers and mystics of Islam: the first by Professor Louis Massignon, the second by Professor Fritz Meier.

Next comes a very able and instructive lecture by Professor Werner Kaegi on 'The Change of Spirit at the Renaissance'. He subjects to keen scrutiny the generally accepted picture of the Renaissance, first given currency by Michelet and Burckhardt, as a true 'rebirth' of the human mind and spirit; and reaches the conclusion that this

picture is in great measure an unwarranted projection of the secularist-evolutionist-liberal ideals of the 19th century onto the 14th and 15th. Change there was, but also far more continuity with the past than the 19th century cared to recognise. Individualism, subjectivism, positivism, emancipation from authority, anthropocentrism—Professor Kaegi examines in turn just how much and how little ground there is for attributing, whether in praise or blame, these characteristics to the period. He brings forward considerable evidence for his thesis that the real ‘changes’ were rather those of a tendency towards simplicity in reaction to the flamboyant art and thought of the middle ages, and a reawakened sense of man’s dependence on Divine Grace as against his own works.

After the historians come the scientists. Professor Friedrich Dessauer, the eminent physicist of Fribourg, bridges the gap with a very noteworthy paper on ‘Galileo, Newton and the Change in Western Thought’. He emphasises the immense change which has been wrought in the outlook and life of western man by the introduction of the experimental method of inquiry into natural phenomena (which he carefully and rightly distinguishes from mere experience) and the discovery of the differential calculus. In a deeply moving and thoughtful concluding section, Professor Dessauer stresses the challenge which this new outlook presents to modern man, as it is seen by one who is himself no mean ‘martyr of science’ as well as a devout Catholic. His examination of the divorce of scientific inquiry from Revelation (both by the theologians, and more excusably by the scientists) and his plea for an asceticism and even a mysticism of natural science, is one which no thoughtful Catholic should neglect. The extent to which this outlook has been further changed by the discoveries of the past thirty years in the field both of physics and of biology, the ‘tendency to disorder’ which they disclose in nature and the consequent ‘sacrificium intellectus’ which they demand of the human spirit, are shown by another eminent physicist, Professor Erwin Schrödinger, in a subsequent paper. Dr Paul Schmitt shows how the new form of the perennial problem of Nature and Spirit was anticipated by Goethe in his attitude to the natural sciences. Professor Adolf Portmann treats of ‘Biology and the phenomenon of the Spiritual’, and shows with scientific integrity and modesty how much, and how little, modern biological method and discovery can enlighten us on the subject.

But the *pièce de résistance* at this Eranos was undoubtedly Professor C. G. Jung’s stiff paper on ‘The Spirit of Psychology’. Here we shall find his most serious effort to date to define such basic terms of his psychology as ‘psyche’, ‘unconscious’ and ‘archetype’; and in so doing to show how, on psycho-empirical grounds, man’s ‘natural’ or instinctive and ‘spiritual’ or psychological functions are to be differentiated and co-related. The paper requires far more detailed examination than is possible in this review; we will draw attention only to his

suggestive comparison of the psyche to the light-spectrum which fades away at both ends into invisibility.

A philosopher may miss from these papers any treatment of the conceptions of either Nature or Spirit *per altissimas causas*; and the theologian will miss any discussion of them in the light of the explicit Word of God. But each will find many challenges to rethinking and reapplying his own conceptions, and a most welcome awareness of the existence of the problems with which he himself, with different equipment, is wrestling. He will see also how these problems are being envisaged and confronted by eminent and honest minds of our time.

VICTOR WHITE, O.P.

DU TEMPS ET DE L'ÉTERNITÉ. By Louis Lavelle. (Aubier, Paris; n.p.)

M. Lavelle, professor of philosophy at the Collège de France, here expands his ideas on Time sketched briefly in *La Présence Totale*. Only a few themes of his 'philosophy of the spirit' can be examined, and these only in summary fashion, here.

Time, the thesis runs, is the mediator between matter and mind and not between nothingness and being: the mediator between possibility and act, passivity and activity. Without it consciousness is unthinkable. It introduces meaning for 'if meaning did not have a temporal acceptance, it could not have an intellectual'. It is Time that introduces essences and is the continual justification of the ontological argument, because if there were no mind there would be no Time and therefore nothing existent. Moreover, things pass but they also endure, and there is no duration except in the mind.

The abolition of the sensible is then the condition of spiritual existence. As long as things are enjoyed through the senses we cannot penetrate their meaning and discover their essence: for that reason events and persons often don't acquire spiritual reality for us until their bodily presence is abolished. Phenomena have no inside, no essence; their nature is to pass. They are implied in the notion of Becoming, which is itself an expression of their insufficiency at the same time as of their relation to that Being from which continually comes to them a new determination. The phenomenon is born of what we can call the act of (mental) participation and the datum the mind's act actualises (apparently the sensible actualised by the datum sensed is ignored).

Matter is the presence of being not as it is in itself but as it appears to us (not *en soi*, but *pour nous*). It stands at the meeting-point of space and time, a sort of clothes-line offered to all kinds of participation. The essences bind it and diversify it in different ways, but the essences are created by the mind. The Parmenidean doctrine that all being is actual peeps through in the assertion that there is always a material world, but it is always instantaneous, only a surface; and certainly there is no Becoming in matter. Even the apparent extended