

BOOK REVIEWS

COSMOLOGY. By E. Finlay-Freundlich. "International Encyclopedia of Unified Science," Vol. I, No. 8. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1951. Pp. 59. Paper, \$1.25.
[Article-review above, pp. 183-96]

PFLICHT UND NEIGUNG. DIE GRUNDLAGEN DER SITTLICHKEIT.
By Hans Reiner. Meisenheim am Glan: Westkulturverlag
A. Hain, 1951. Pp. xii + 316. Cloth, DM 19.50; paper,
DM 17.

Dr. Reiner received his Ph.D. under Husserl; he has taught at several universities and now teaches ethics at Freiburg im Breisgau. His first work (1927) dealt with the problem of freedom and the present work appears as the culmination of a series of studies concerned with problems of ethics. It is not, one gathers, the last work; it endeavors only to lay foundations.

Since Scheler's *Der Formalismus in der Ethik* (1913), German moral philosophy has become critical of Kant's approach; Hartmann's voluminous *Ethics* is only one of several examples of this trend. Dr. Reiner's argument is based chiefly on the alternative indicated in the title. Kant, as we know, held that an act is moral only when motivated by duty alone; "inclination" has nothing to do with the moral value of intention or conduct. This point had been the one from which Schiller started his criticism of Kant. Curiously enough, both Kant and Schiller apparently were not aware of the profound differences between their views. The author points out the differences and devotes the first eighty-eight pages to their clarification and a penetrating analysis of Kant's doctrine. He disagrees with Kant because of the wrong demonstration of the true idea that the moral good is a "good in itself," because of the deduction of the content of the moral law by means of the concept of law from the notion of duty, and because of the relation, in Kant, of morality and freedom. Having thus cleared the terrain, the author proceeds to discuss the method of ethic inquiry.

Dr. Reiner stresses the importance of experience and induction in the study of ethics. The facts of moral understanding, conscience,

sense of duty, and so on, must be ascertained first. The knowledge the philosopher has of his own conscience is the starting point for all further inquiry. But the philosopher is also a child of his times and his people. The author believes in rather deep-going racial differences which, as it were, color the moral vision of peoples, although the basic moral truths and principles are recognizable to all men. Of this he attempts to furnish empirical proof in the last part, in about fifty-odd pages, comparing the consciousness of moral "oughtness" in the Germans, Greeks, Romans, and Jews of the Old Testament. The factual basis is rather small. The author himself realizes that more evidence is needed. It would seem, particularly, that much more attention should be paid to general cultural and historical conditions; it would not be difficult to show that similar conditions elicit similar views also in the field of morals; but this demonstration would be as insufficient as the author's unless much more data were collected.

The combination of empirical and rational analysis is characteristic of the school of phenomenology. The present work is suitable to make one realize that this method, when expertly handled, may prove very useful and yield valuable results.

Conscience manifests itself in four forms, as warning conscience, admonishing conscience, good conscience, and bad conscience. It is "located" in the fundamental layers (*Untergrund*) out of which the ego arises. The ego or its "center" is active in all acts of will when man is conscious of his responsibility, whereas the deeper layers send up into consciousness—so to speak—data in face of which the ego is receptive rather than active. Many pages are devoted to a detailed and searching analysis of the various orectic phenomena, to summarize which is hardly feasible. One is grateful to the author not only for many illuminating remarks, but also for his emphasis on the objectivity of values, which, on the phenomenal level, parallel the objects of perception, but can be shown to possess "rationally founded objectivity, as it exists for instance in mathematics and logic." All values carry with them the note of "oughtness," that they should be real. Merely subjective values are such as to render renunciation possible, whereas the demand of objective values is independent of subjective idiosyncrasies, and their demands are of an objective nature.

The author sets his conception over against those of Heidegger and St. Thomas. In regard to the latter, it would seem that there is a certain misinterpretation. The author—referring to the *Summa Theologiae*, I. 5—affirms that "the concept of *bonum* designates

a being *only* insofar as it is an object of striving (*appetibile*).” Therefore, Dr. Reiner claims, the good is understood here exclusively in the sense of “a good *for*.” It seems questionable whether this interpretation is in accord with the ideas of St. Thomas. It may be that Dr. Reiner, as many others before him, read into the proposition a sense which is modern rather than Thomistic. His understanding is, apparently, that the *bonitas entis* is founded on the *appetibilitas*. But one might argue, and more convincingly, that the relation is the opposite; namely, that a being becomes *appetibile quia bonum*. The proposition *bonum est quod omne ens appetit* defines appetite rather than the good. In truth, there seems to be less difference between the traditional view and that of Dr. Reiner than he assumes.

The analysis of the phenomena of moral consciousness, conscience, and conduct is summarized in the statement that morality is founded on an intuition (called by the author, in accord with Scheler and Hartmann, a *Wertgefühl*) of values, on reason, and on freedom. There is “practical reason,” which is not “pure” but related by its very nature to values and guided by them.

This brief report renders but imperfectly the ideas of the book. A final judgment will have to be based on a careful study and critical evaluation. This will be a rewarding task. It will be a difficult one, in view of the complexity of the matter, but rendered somewhat easier because Dr. Reiner, unlike many other contemporary authors, writes a simple and clear style.

RUDOLPH ALLERS

Georgetown University

DAS UNPERSÖNLICHE DENKEN. By Paul Feldkeller. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1949. Pp. 416. DM 12.

This book is not easy to read and less easy to report on. It is written in a peculiar style, particularly characterized by the coinage of many terms which cannot well be rendered in English. This review has to be satisfied with briefly indicating what seems to be the main idea. Not as if the study of this book were unrewarding; there are many interesting passages, penetrating analyses of problems and situations, and astute remarks on questions of psychology or sociology.

The main idea may be stated thus. All rational or scientific endeavors of modern man have been, as it were, depersonalized. They follow an “unpersonal” pattern. The individual thinker or scholar