

A Great Pragmatist

THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE ACT. By George Herbert Mead. Edited by Charles W. Morris. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. 1938. \$5.

Reviewed by ROBERT BIERSTEDT

THIS rich volume completes the publication of the fugitive papers of George Herbert Mead, professor of philosophy at the University of Chicago from 1893 until his death in 1931. None of the material, with one minor exception, has appeared in print before and nothing more remains from the hand of Mead except a few fragments which the editors do not deem worthy of publication. Together with its predecessors—"The Philosophy of the Present," "Mind, Self, and Society," and "Movements of Thought in the Nineteenth Century"—the present volume represents a formidable and solid contribution to the corpus of American philosophy. It not only rounds out Mead's thought during the last decade of his life but also fills a number of important lacunae in the movement initiated by Charles Sanders Peirce as "pragmatism" and developed and instrumentalized by William James and John Dewey as pragmatism.

Too much credit cannot be given to Professor Charles W. Morris, who edited both "Mind, Self, and Society" and "The Philosophy of the Act," the latter in collaboration with John M. Brewster, Albert M. Dunham, and David L. Miller. He earns a special award of merit for the long introduction to this book, which provides an excellent summary of Mead's thought, indicates its ramifications and implications, and builds it into as systematic a philosophy as possible. In addition, Dr. Henry C. A. Mead has supplied a sketch of his father's life up to the time of his appointment to the faculty of the University of Chicago.

A collection of uncoordinated fragments extending to almost seven hundred pages

does not lend itself to a coordinated review, and it is furthermore impossible to duplicate in a paragraph or two what Professor Morris himself requires sixty-seven pages to achieve. In general, however, the papers in this volume bring to light Mead's contributions to cosmology. They also deal with metaphysical and epistemological questions, although what the editors call the philosophy of the act absorbs both the theory of existence and the theory of knowledge. The act is simply the most general category of a pragmatic philosophy "which has become aware of the category of action and the relation of thought to behavior," which takes full cognizance of both directions of the interaction between organism and environment, and which accepts the method of science as the method of philosophy.

The first fifteen of these essays find Mead busy with an analysis of the act into the stages of impulse, perception, manipulation, and consummation—four stages of a structure elastic enough to include the whole of philosophy from the pragmatic point of view. Other essays on ontological assumptions and on the philosophy of science deserve particular commendation as do also Mead's efforts to harmonize relativity physics with pragmatism. Supplementary essays include pieces on Whitehead, on both Newtonian and Einsteinian relativity, on science and religion, on the philosophy of history, and on such traditional categories, among others, as reality, form, emergence, teleology, causality, and contingency.

There is pure gold in these pages, but only those with the proper technical equipment should prospect for it. The essays in this book, and Mead's work as a whole, illustrate in a cogent manner what a philosopher can produce when he frankly restricts himself to the methods of natural science. Their major and most refreshing virtue appears in the fact that almost every sentence refers to the world

of human experience and not to empty concepts with which less empirically minded philosophers attempt to nourish their systems. Mead maintains throughout a thoroughgoing biological empiricism without jeopardizing at any instance either the independence of the external world or the objectivity of natural science. He furnishes in addition what seems to this reviewer the most substantial foundation in existence for contemporary social science.

While it is still too early to assess the durability of Mead's philosophy—all of which is now available for the first time—no hazard attaches to the prediction that when the material in this volume filters through the philosophical and scientific thought of the present, Mead will enjoy comparable stature with James and Dewey in the extent of his influence. His erudition, his profundity, and his pragmatic wisdom cannot fail to impress those who have previously been but imperfectly acquainted with his work. His is a philosophy calculated to make any man feel at home on earth, primarily because it does as little violence to common sense as is philosophically possible. In editing these final essays Professor Morris has performed a significant service not only for George Herbert Mead but for American thought.

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Phenomena of Life

FEARFULLY AND WONDERFULLY MADE. By Renée von Eulenburg-Wiener. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1938. \$3.50.

AS an introduction to an account of the anatomy, histology, embryology, and physiology of the human organism, Dr. Eulenburg-Wiener has set a philosophic concept which is that a presentation of this kind should relate man to the universe by considering the phenomena of life on the basis of the energy concepts of modern physics.

This has a vague air of profundity, but after pondering it for some time we have humbly come to the conclusion that either it doesn't mean anything at all or we do not know what it means. If it is supposed to be a new idea, that would be a surprise to all the physiologists we know, because all of them already relate the phenomena of life to the energy concepts of modern physics. If it means anything else than what they mean, we cannot see it. So we fear we miss the purport of this book except that it is a presentation of human anatomy and physiology.

The cell is described, and there is a chapter on embryology. Follow descriptions of digestion of the various kinds of foodstuffs, the blood, the circulatory and respiratory systems, nutrition, the kidneys, the ductless glands, and the nervous system.

It is difficult to say exactly what audience the book is expected to reach. It is too brief and too elementary for medical students, and does not detail the experimental evidence and measurements of physiology enough for them. And it is too technical for the lay reader.

The Criminal Record

The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	Crime, Place, Sleuth	Summing Up	Verdict
PRELUDE TO WAR Leslie Charteris (Crime Club: \$2.)	"The Saint" and Hoppy Uniatz mix it up in grand style with slimy British gun-mongers and fanatical French fascists.	Typical Templar tale, with Simon slipping out of impossible predicaments; deaths too numerous to mention; and Garrison finish.	Supercharged
THE MAN BEHIND John Hunter (Dutton: \$2.)	Unknown, unseen, and unscrupulous London master criminal falls at last to amateur Pressley and Capt. Dantry.	Few doubts about villain's identity after first inning, but yarn has much varied action and some pleasantly lurid characters.	Melodrama
MURDER AT MANEUVERS Royce Howes (Crime Club: \$2.)	Bullet through tent slays Soviet observer at American maneuvers. Capt. Ben Lucius out-generals a clever killer.	Novel background of mimic warfare, choleric brass hats, and suspicious "camp followers." Intelligent sleuthing and two-fisted handling.	Good

A Culture in Exile

BY B. W. HUEBSCH

THE other night I picked up two books of sixteen or eighteen years ago, both dealing with the German literature of their day. One is by a liberal critic, the other by a severe reactionary. Although only so short a time has elapsed, I was struck by the absurdity of uttering final judgments on living authors. Many of the writers, important enough to be mentioned in those comparatively recent books, are as dead as a doornail. But what impressed me even more forcibly was that, of the German and Austrian authors whose reputations have survived, and whose fame has increased in those sixteen or eighteen years, most of them are exiles. Their names are banned from Herr Hitler's new, made-to-order encyclopedias; their books may not be sold, and anybody in Germany who even possesses them is subject to inhuman penalties.

The serious question arises: What is to become of German letters? Can there be a spontaneous flowering of literary talent when men are not free to express their thoughts and ideas openly? Such of the exiles as are famous enough to be translated into other languages will continue to write, but where will their successors come from? I am skeptical of the survival of German literature without German soil. There are publishing houses in Switzerland, Holland, and Sweden that publish the work of these exiles in the German language, but what will they publish when the present generation of exiles expires? Truly, we are present at the death of a culture in so far as culture is perpetuated in letters.

What is the fate of these men whom millions have read, whose works, in the last few decades, gave such glamor to Germany as she had not had since Gerhart Hauptmann burst on the world, forty-five years ago, with his drama of rebellion, "The Weavers."

They have not scattered widely; they turn to democracies as a flower turns to the sun, and democracies are none too plentiful in these days.

Switzerland is the nearest refuge: Thomas Mann made his home there for a few years, and now, to our great good fortune, this enlightened man is to be one of us. His brother, Heinrich Mann, whose influence on the present generation of German writers has been profound, went to the South of France when the Nazis gained power, and lives there now. Not far away, on the Mediterranean, is Lion Feuchtwanger, with one eye on world politics and the other on his new novel.

Several have turned to Palestine, notably Arnold Zweig, author of "Sergeant Grischa." He is not to be confused with Stefan Zweig, the Austrian biographer of Marie Antoinette, of Mary Stuart, etc. The two men are not related. Stefan Zweig lives quietly in London and will make a lecture tour of the United States next January.

Franz Werfel, of whose "Forty Days of Musa Dagh" I need not remind you, fled Vienna to London and is now in France,

where he will seek a quiet spot in which to work; on the Riviera or in the Pyrenees.

Countless lights of varying magnitude have been thrown into prison; of some we know only by rumor; the Nazis do not issue bulletins. It is particularly depressing to think of Felix Salten, creator of the lovable book, "Bambi," deprived of his liberty in his old age for no apparent reason.

Long before President Roosevelt called on the nations to unite in discussing the problem which Germany unloaded on the world, the French Republic had been accepting refugees within reason. Alfred Döblin, known to Americans for his "Alexanderplatz," lives in Paris and will celebrate his sixtieth birthday there this summer. Joseph Roth, whose novel, "Job," appeared some years ago, makes his home there. Also S. Kracauer, whose "Orpheus in Paris" was published here this season. Another German Parisian is a young man named Katz, a new and fine writer whose novel, "The Fishmans," will soon appear here. If your memory goes back as far as three years you will recall the successful biography of Catherine the Great by Gina Kaus. Frau Kaus escaped from Vienna and is hard at work in Paris.

The United States has drawn some good prizes. Bruno Frank, author of "Cervantes," is in Hollywood; Ernst Toller, the poet and playwright, will, in five years, be able to vote for Tammany—or against it; and Ferdinand Bruckner, an outstanding talent among the modern German playwrights, is another new New Yorker.

One of the ironies of the present German madness is their unawareness that with every blow that they strike they injure no one so much as themselves. That is especially true in the field of culture: when they expel a good painter, or composer or author, not only do they lose him, but they lower their standard by putting inferior men in the vacant places.

And what are we going to do about it all? Grit our teeth and see to it that it doesn't happen here.

The foregoing article was originally written as a broadcast. B. W. Huebsch is a member of the firm of the Viking Press, which has published in America the works of many of the leading German authors.

SOLUTION OF LAST WEEK'S DOUBLE-CROSTIC (No. 222)

ROSSETTI: "SONNETS—THE MOONSTAR."

And as, when night's fair fires
their queen surround,
An emulous star too near the moon
will ride—

Even so thy rays within her
luminous bound

Were traced no more; and by the
light so drowned

Lady, not thou, but she was glorified.

The AMEN CORNER

"If music and sweet poetry agree,
As they needs must —"

Richard Barnfield.

Mr. Miles Merwin Kastendieck might have taken these verses as the motto of the book in which he quotes them, *England's Musical Poet, Thomas Campion*¹ which the Oxford University Press² has just brought out.

"You that in Musicke do delight
Your minds for to solace"

can do no better than to invest in this volume at once. It is so beautifully produced it will decorate your shelves permanently, and so enlightening you are likely to read it at a sitting. To quote the author, it reveals "the interrelationship of poetry and music which created one of the great phenomena of English literature—the Elizabethan lyric . . . how poets wrote lyrics to be sung, and composers sought singable lyrics. Together they created an art form called the 'ayre' wherein poetry and music were equally balanced." Campion is selected for special study because he wrote both words and music.

The Oxonian cannot help thinking of Gerard Manley Hopkins, who also was a musician as well as a poet. Everyone who takes literature seriously should possess *The Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins to Robert Bridges and the Correspondence of G. M. Hopkins and R. W. Dixon*.³ Here you have displayed one of the rarest personalities—and one of the most essential critics—since, let us say, Sir Philip Sidney,⁴ and with the added fascination of being almost post-War in his modernism. Now comes a new volume of *Further Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins including his Correspondence with Coventry Patmore*.⁵ Here are all the remaining letters of Hopkins, with the replies to them where possible. In the meantime, you will remember, the Oxford Press has published *The Note-Books and Papers of Gerard Manley Hopkins*,⁶ with Drawings by the poet. (He was also an artist.) And *The Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, edited by Robert Bridges, with an Introduction by Charles Williams, are now available in the inexpensive form⁷ of the Oxford Bookshelf series.

Hopkins is a man hard to let go of, though we had intended going on about the Elizabethans. In our favorite series (you have guessed it! *The World's Classics*)⁸ there is a fresh volume of *Five Elizabethan Tragedies*, edited with an Introduction by A. K. McIlwraith. We haven't left room to tell you about its contents or those of the other drama volumes in this invaluable series. Trollope fans will also want to know that *The Prime Minister* has just been issued also in two volumes.⁹ If you want to know more, write

THE OXONIAN.

(¹) \$3.50. (²) 114 Fifth Avenue. (³) 2 vols. \$10.00. (⁴) *Sir Fulke Greville's Life of the Renowned Sir Philip Sidney*. \$3.30. In the *Tudor and Stuart Library*. (⁵) \$6.00. (⁶) \$8.50. (⁷) \$2.00. (⁸) 80c each. Write for complete list.