

stances will see to it that the man's ethic is congruous, so that, with the best will in the world, people find themselves *obliged* to do heinous things, merely because they accepted a philosophy which put the cart before the horse.'

WALTER SHEWRING.

MOIRA: FATE, GOOD, AND EVIL IN GREEK THOUGHT. By William Chase Greene. (Harvard University Press and Humphrey Milford; 28s.)

This elaborate study is equally remarkable for the thoroughness of its classical scholarship and the superficiality of its philosophy. In its documentation of Greek sources it leaves nothing to be desired. Zeus and Fate, human prosperity and divine jealousy, the sentiments of extremest pessimism ('it were best never to have been born'), the counsels of endurance, the notions of a Golden Age, the antithesis of *physis* and *nomos*—these and other such themes are tracked through Greek literature and marked for reference in an excellent and ingenious index which provides ready answers to such questions as 'What had Pindar to say of *hubris*?' or 'What idea of *nemesis* was entertained by Homer, Theognis, Herodotus, the tragedians?' In his examination of particular passages Professor Greene weighs and marshals expert conclusions and is able on occasion to refute the interpretation of such an authority as A. E. Taylor. The summaries and paraphrases of relevant texts include some passages (e.g. those from Antiphon the sophist, pp. 232-239, and from *Anonymus Iamblichii*, p. 251), which are not easily accessible elsewhere. All this makes the book a most valuable work of reference, and as such I greatly recommend it.

For philosophical judgment of ideas Professor Greene has neither the training nor the capacity. The Greeks themselves, broadly speaking, were badly muddled over the matters in question. They had early lost touch with the Indo-European tradition and could make no serious intellectual use of the residue of primitive myth which more 'barbarous' peoples have understood more fully. It was left to a few great philosophers to regain more or less privately a metaphysical conception of the universe which has greatly served posterity but which for the Greeks in general—the heroes of the 'Greek miracle' of popular propaganda—was, and remained, unattainable. The dilemmas of common Greek thought are faithfully registered by Professor Greene. The solutions of Plato and Aristotle are discussed at a level which fails to do them justice. It would take too long to substantiate this criticism. I will merely note that Professor Greene is seriously impressed by Royce's remark, 'The best world for a moral agent is one that needs him to make it better' ('This little sentence really says everything,' p. 7); that he recommends to would-be students of mysticism the Jamesian classic, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (p. 49); that he attributes to St. Thomas the belief that this is the best of all possible

or conceivable worlds (p. 298); and that after giving a few Greek instances of the symbolism of light he rounds off his references with the sentence: 'The symbolism of light of course pervades also Mithraism, the sayings of Jesus, and the poetry of Dante, Milton, Newman, and the sonnet of Blanco White' (p. 419).

I would suggest in conclusion that no study of Greek thought is likely to be adequate without some consideration of the Indian thought which preceded and the Christian thought which followed it. Good work on both has been done in America, and professional classical scholars might be considerably enlightened if they would seriously meditate such things as Dr. Coomaraswamy's *Recollection, Indian and Platonic* (American Oriental Society, 1944).

WALTER SHEWRING.

PROCESS AND POLARITY. By Wilmon Henry Sheldon. (Columbia University Press; Humphrey Milford; 13s. 6d.).

When you walk there is first the polarity of exertions in standing on two feet, then the poise is lost in the process of stepping out, only to be restored in a new equilibrium. In this smooth piece of philosophical writing, in that English temper which whips out practical synthesis from theoretical compromises to the admiration and exasperation of the partisans of closed systems, the analogy is applied at length; a position of truth is stressed in each great school, but it must not, as it were, be caught on one foot, but paired and set in active and co-operating tension with its opposite, so to start an advance to a higher position.

Professor Sheldon would not have us demand absolute certitude from philosophy, but a feasible plan of action. Pure epistemology and analysis lead nowhere; intrinsic coherence is not enough; there is no passage from mere thought to being. But philosophy is a guide to life; there is a correct and growing response to our environment, of which one test is the ability to live successfully and one condition an attitude of practical preparation rather than of theoretic worry. He cannot, however, be classed simply as a pragmatist, for, as he observes profoundly, though the various types of philosophy may not be true as they stand, 'is not their relationship true? This he sets out to study.

With only passing mention of the dwarf types, he considers the great types of philosophy shown by history to possess the power of survival. They are not fixed in deadlock, but moving in active intercourse. Neglect the early Ionians, and the historical sequence roughly corresponds to the order of thought. Idealism, the affirmation of indestructible values beyond all change, even to the denial of the earthly here and now, is countered by materialism. Aristotelean scholasticism rises from them both as a synthesis on a higher plane with its doctrine of form in things, to be in its turn complemented by the philosophy of the novelty and ultimate reality of