

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.

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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

depth in things is not there except as a phenomenon from which the mind constructs 'ontological depth'. Rolling Time, as Dryden puts it, is lost in round Eternity; matter in mind; existence in essences.

What is our starting point? That existential act that presents us to ourselves, the thinking act which is itself an existence. Hence, then, the primacy Lavelle accords to existence over essence. The idea is not so much the expression of a real datum as of the mind's creative act which fathers it, and this is an existential operation founded and achieved in the Idea participated. The mind's act cannot here denature the real, it is not a 'nothingisation' of reality as Sartre would say. You only denature the real if you reduce it to the phenomenon which appears in an instant. Past and future are also mental creations. Mind not only reduces multiplicity to unity, but even produces this multiplicity without which its unity would be the unity of nothing. Some thinkers today carry the reduction of everything to identity so far that even substance and energy, for instance, are equated with number.

All our knowledge takes place in the instant and man's instant is only a shadow. Yet it is also a participation of God's eternal instant, which is the source of participation before Time. Once, however, participation starts, it is the instant in which our own act is exercised that engenders Time. (Notice how God is invoked as Beginning and not as End). It would seem that we are present to things mainly in perception and absent from them in the idea. Nevertheless it is not the presence given but our act that makes it present to us that is important. Admittedly this is like the Reminiscence of Plato, but this mental presence is not an infinite memory (past) nor an infinite possibility (future) but an infinite present. It is not a general idea but rather a primitive experience, 'a feeling anchored in existence'.

It will be seen that M. Lavelle's whole position turns on his definition of the existential act 'as an act of thinking. That this act exists accidentally and not as a substance is not appreciated, that it is in fact preceded by the feeling anchored in existence' (if by this is meant 'natural desire'), and that again by my existence itself is not considered vital, for I apparently *am* not in any important sense until I build up a stock of ideas. In spite of existential protestations the root of reality for Lavelle is in essences and not in the fact of existence. They involve existence, as does the ontological proof: we are not until we think (new version of *cogito ergo sum*).

Again, not appreciating fully that knowledge is an *added* perfection to our existence, Lavelle confuses metaphysical thinking with instantaneous thinking. For him our knowledge of the future is already present to us in the essences that await their determinations and these, when they come, only suggest knowledge to us, but don't give it, being themselves but shadows. In other words, here is the Platonic Reminiscence theory in up-to-date terminology, for phenomena merely remind us of reality but are not themselves real.

In addition, Lavelle holds that Being is univocal. As we saw above, substance is being in the same sense as accidents, and so there is only one Being. We, therefore, would seem to be at the same ontological level as God, whose essence it is, not just to be, but to be participated. This implies that because there is a necessary relation between God and us there is therefore a necessary relation between us and God: the theology of the Trinity would explain the superintelligible truth here sought on a purely philosophical level on the principle that the good is self-diffusive. As the mind ascends the grades of essence it apparently grows remoter from the order of existence, and 'the true world is the world of ideas and not of things'. In short, one could comment, another needless reduction to identity is being effected here, for Being is identified with Thinking.

If the superintelligible is simplified, the infra-natural is ignored. The fact that all knowledge has perception at its base is forgotten. The sensible has to be abolished before we can know, says Lavelle; a half-truth that ignores the whole biological basis of intellect, Pre-conscious activity, the conversion of sensations into images and the final creation of the concept from the image by the mind's activity, in short, this continuity with the concrete through the image, is precisely what establishes our thinking as valid.

Two leading themes deserve to be noted. The universal is made entirely the mind's creation, there being no universal empirically implied in this shadow-world of ours. Secondly, the real primacy is given to 'essences' which are held to be the ground of unity and therefore of reality in things. Against this it ought to be said that things not only participate in Absolute Perfection by their essence, they participate in pure Act by their being (which in our minds divides itself irreducibly into subjective potency, essence, and subjective act, existence). Since the rest of the theory turns on this initial misconception of Lavelle's, it is to be feared that the hopes aroused by the tremendous title are not fulfilled.

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THE INFLUENCE OF THE ENLIGHTENMENT ON THE CATHOLIC THEORY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN FRANCE, 1750-1850. By E. C. Elwell. (Harvard and O.U.P.; \$3.50.)

This study is mainly concerned with the influence of the Enlightenment on the matter and form of catechetical instruction, and it illustrates the defensive rôle of the French Church, predominantly Gallican and Jansenist, in face of the disruptive effects of the Encyclopædia (to which the majority of the contributors were abbés, although the most influential, Deists like d'Alembert and Rousseau). Until a few years after Billuart scholastic arguments for God prevailed in religious instruction, then, with the boom in natural science, arguments from 'the spectacle of nature'. There seems to have been a tendency to give practical primacy to morals over religion as the Encyclopædist pressed for moral and civic education in place of the