

section of the work, in which he undertakes to gauge the moral attitudes of Western peoples by his standards, falls short of success. Restricting his detailed examination to the Greek, Germanic, and Christian traditions, but promising further studies in primitive and Oriental cultures, he concludes that there is a qualified basis for moral consensus. A certain consciousness of duty is, he concludes, everywhere evident, but its form varies from group to group, and from one age to another. Thus there exist in all Western cultures inclinations toward freedom, reason, and fruitive and objective values, but the theonomous forms of Biblical religion differ from the autonomous forms in Classical civilization. Similarly, Reiner suggests, there are deep differences between the honor-feeling of the Japanese and the responsibility-feelings of the Chinese.

The danger of naiveté in such generalizations will be apparent. Some of the historical studies, however, by which they are supported—for instance, a long discussion of the historical meanings of the Golden Rule—are valuable excursions into the history of ethics.

Reiner's project of an empirical investigation of the distribution and variations in moral sentiment does not promise great success. But his own ethical analysis shows a fresh, empirical self-sufficiency that is wholesome. His criticism of Heidegger's strictures upon duty-ethics and goods-ethics alike is a particularly useful part of his book, though his hope of giving existentialism a moral direction through his analyses will no doubt prove to be unwarranted optimism. They will certainly contribute, however, to a growing area of agreement in ethical theory.

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*Goethe's Faust as a Renaissance Man: Parallels and Prototypes.*

HAROLD JANTZ. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press. 1951. xvii, 198 pp. \$3.50.

Within clearly definable limits, this is an illuminating monograph. Unfortunately, the preface and the first and last chapter are apt to confuse the reader with their long discussions of what the author is trying to do, and what he is not trying to do; but the following quotation seems a fair summary:

The chief question posed by this study is whether the values and principles, the personalities and actions of the drama, in their larger interrelations and sequences, resemble those of the Renaissance more than they do those of Goethe's own age. The answer seems to be, yes, they do. The drama is not subjective and not of the eighteenth century with some decorative Renaissance coloring; it is largely objective, of the Renaissance with some intentional anachronisms and with the personal coloring and blending which accompanied the act of poetic creation. [P. 124.]

One may question whether the book proves as much as all that, but one will have to admit that it offers a number of stimulating suggestions. And Professor Jantz himself says elsewhere:

There is no need to deny the validity of the standard interpretations. *Faust* is indeed expressive of its author personally and also of some secondary tendencies of the eighteenth century. This old thesis is certainly true. . . . The old and the new are not mutually contradictory, but complementary. [P. 4.]

As an example of the author's more suggestive points, one may refer to his demonstration that Wagner—the pedant of Part One, who in Part Two is intent on making an artificial human being—represents, even in his first scene, a particular type of Renaissance humanism; so the continuity of the two parts of the drama is greater in this respect than has often been supposed (*vide* Michael Toxites, a 16th century Paracelsian). This is well taken and certainly does not preclude that what makes the Wagner of Part One an unforgettable experience is not the kind of thing Professor Jantz discusses, but his timelessness.

If this consideration, which is no less applicable to Jantz's other points, suggests *one* of the limitations of his book, there are at least two others. First, true to its subtitle, the study deals with "parallels and prototypes"—not influences. The author makes no claim that Goethe was aware of most of these parallels—not even in the case of Nicolas of Cusa and Pico della Mirandola, whose philosophies Jantz considers very similar to that of the drama. At most, it is suggested that Goethe, with his wonderful intuition, divined the central tenets of the "Renaissance man."

Secondly, every piece of erudition is taken ever so seriously, while Goethe's sublimely ironic playfulness is overlooked. This is especially true of the references to the last scenes (pp. 111 f. and 133 f.). Like Hohlfeld—to whom the book is dedicated, and whose articles on Faust's death scene is cited as authority for its interpretation (p. 164)—Jantz ignores Mephistopheles' aside, that Faust only *thinks* he is winning land from the ocean for people to live on. And even if one should mistrust Mephistopheles' testimony, which barely precedes Faust's last speech, there is no getting around the fact that the blind Faust, who dreams of some future time when he might stand "with free men on free ground," has only just then expressed his delight at hearing "the throng that slaves [!] for me"—and these magical minions of Mephistopheles are not at all doing the work of which Faust speaks, but are even then digging his grave. Scholars have too often overlooked such deliberate ironies, partly because they lacked Goethe's sense of humor, partly because they were too intent on making a hero of Faust. Although Jantz is not unaware of Faust's shortcomings,

it still seems in line with the latter tendency when he says: "Faust is as imperfect, fallible, sinful, reprehensible as Michelangelo was" (p. 47). Or Michelangelo must have been guilty of much that I never heard of. On the other hand, the difference in actual accomplishment seems striking.

There are, in short, statements about the drama as a whole which one might well dispute, as when Jantz overstates his case by saying: "the claim that *Faust* contains many a fortuitous accretion is not true at all" (p. 117). But in spite of all such reservations, the book is, for the most part, pleasantly unpretentious, and the many parallels do shed some new light on *Faust*. Beyond that, one may applaud Jantz's repudiation of the "tendency toward seeing Faust the man as a specifically German phenomenon. On the contrary, Faust is throughout and in essentials a European" (p. 128). Or should we say: he is, with all his failings, as supranational and as timeless as Prometheus?

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