

abroad. In a clear account of the results of recent experiments (it requires some previous knowledge in the reader) the author shows the necessity of abandoning the naïve realism of the classical physicist, who in however abstract a way still conceived the atom as an object existing independent of the spectator, and so could picture some permanent model of it in his imagination. The modern physicist, on the other hand, can think of the atom only in relation to the experiment which allows him to describe it in some particular way; he is 'compelled to look upon himself as a subject', someone who as much makes as finds what he beholds. Physics itself now seems to insist that there are a priori elements in knowledge. In this Dr von Weizsäcker sees a confirmation of Kant's ideas, though he reduces such non-empirical elements from being the presuppositions of all possible knowledge to what must actually be supposed at each stage of thought in its historical progress. But the above summary necessarily fails to do justice to what are after all 'tentative considerations in the form of a request for co-operation and criticism', a request which one may hope Thomists at least will not refuse the author, even though they may not agree with all he says.

L.B.

PHILOSOPHIES OF INDIA. By Heinrich Zimmer, edited by Joseph Campbell. (Routledge & Kegan Paul; 42s.)

The editor describes this volume of 687 pages as 'a large and awesome fragment' of what Dr Zimmer's history of Indian philosophy would have been but for his lamented death. It is the substance of lectures delivered and in preparation at Columbia University, the final chapters being reconstructed from jottings, remembered talks and other sources.

Even in this posthumous form, however, the distinguished Indologist's work remains an exceptionally lucid introduction to this vast subject, and could be read with advantage before proceeding to the more abstruse volumes of Dasgupta and Radhakrishnan.

A main thesis of the book is that the heterodox (non-Vedic) systems represent the thought of pre-Aryan India, repeatedly clashing and interacting with the Vedic-Aryan tradition—pessimistic dualism with optimistic monism—and that the latest, Tantric phase is a creative synthesis of the Aryan and the indigenous types of thought. Similarly, the peculiar genius of the *Bhagavadgita* is that it gathers together the manifold strands of Indian religious thought. The concern of Jainism, Sankhya and Yoga was to disengage and release the spiritual self from matter, whereas the Brahmins sought fulfilment by absorption of the self in a divine Absolute. Yet Sankara's final formulation of Vedanta, with its annihilation of opposites and identification of thought and

nescience, reaches the same position as the paradoxical 'Transcendental Wisdom' of Mahayana Buddhism. 'Has the power of the land', asks the author (p. 459) 'triumphed to such a degree that in the very doctrine that pretends, with the most authority, to represent "the gist of the whole meaning of the Vedas" (*vedanta*), the world-feeling, not of the Vedic singers but of the conquered folk whom they despised, and whom they sought to shut out from the society of the twice-born, is what has come into its own?'

But the last word is not with this world-negation. Side by side with it the author sees in Tantrism, as in certain types of Indian art, a dionysian affirmation of the world of name and form; indeed, he scarcely conceals his sympathy with its orgies rather than with the ascetic flights of the transcendental sages and saints.

BASIL WRIGHTON

SECULAR LYRICS OF THE XIVTH AND XVTH CENTURIES. Edited by R. H. Robbins. (Geoffrey Cumberlege: Oxford University Press; 18s.)

Academic orthodoxy locates the great age of the English lyric between Wiat (1503-1542) and Waller (1606-1687), and Mr Robbins's book does little to disturb one's faith in the accuracy of this assessment. Nevertheless, I personally have not seen any later production which reaches the level of achievement recorded in Chaucer's *ballade*:

So hathe my herte caught in remembraunce
Your beautè hool, and steadfast governaunce.

Remembering this, it was not unreasonable to hope that some of Chaucer's contemporaries might have measured up to the achievements of the Master, in this *genre* at least. There was, after all, the pseudo-Chaucerian roundel *Merciles Beaute* (usually printed with Chaucer's works):

Your yën two wol slee me sodenly
I may the beaute of hem not sustene.

Here is that exquisite crystal beauty which is the acme of lyric perfection. Judged by these standards, Mr Robbins's book is frankly disappointing, but not without interest. Among the 'courtly love lyrics' here collected, there are a number of competent performances. The modern reader, however, should remind himself that the art of the lyric is not concerned with 'literary values'—themes and imagery are stereotyped. The art lies in the effectiveness of rhythm and cadence in supplying the emotive component to the overt (and usually trite) statement.

Mr Robbins's scholarship has germanic thoroughness, but when he openly states that he has chosen his material 'irrespective of poetic merit' and that the criterion of selection has been 'the number of texts