

Book Reviews

The Human Race—A Study in the Nature of Knowledge, by Emil Froeschels, Philosophical Library, New York (194-).

Dr. Froeschel's book will be of great interest for the theoretically-minded Individual Psychologists. It is an ambitious effort to offer new solutions of old philosophical problems: space and time, reality and truth, causalism and conditionalism.

The author emphasizes that our conception of the three infinite magnitudes—the mathematical, the geometrical, and the theological—is possible only because it is based upon congenital knowledge. "Since everything we learn starts with sensual impressions, and since sensual impressions are restricted to measurable quantities, and since any measurable quantity added to other measurable quantities never even approaches the infinite, our knowledge of infinite magnitudes must be a congenital knowledge."

In his chapter on God, the author approaches this problem from the vantage point of oneness: "Infinite magnitudes do not consist of parts, a part being something that added to something enlarges it, and if taken away, diminishes it. Yet the infinite can never grow nor shrink, therefore God can not consist of any sum of single properties. He and His actions are always a unity. We have to perform the heroic task always to know the infinite and always to try fruitlessly to study it with the means at our minds' disposal."

The author shows further that everything sensually or mentally comprehensible can only be understood against the background of its opposite and he devotes a chapter to the application of this thesis to the time concept. He discusses, in addition, the age-old question of body and soul, with special reference to medicine.

Most remarkable is Dr. Froeschel's suggestion to replace the terms "conscious and unconscious," constantly employed by psychoanalysts, by "expression-ripe and non-expression-ripe." He interprets "expression" as a *deliberate* function signifying a sensation, a thought, or a feeling. This terminology—which is close to the Adlerian concept of "understanding and not understanding one's own tendencies"—opens a wide range of nuances between nearer and farther from expression-ripeness.

Likewise we will accept the author's conclusion, drawn in the chapter "Our Destiny": "As long as we are concerned only with the differences between human beings such as religions, races, political convictions, we only deprive ourselves of the higher part of our personality (congenital knowledge of the infinite magnitudes) and submit to the part which in itself—without the higher part—would represent our kinship with animals."

LEONARD DEUTSCH

We Four Together, by Helen Weissenstein; David McKay Company, Philadelphia (194--).

This is a book for young and old. Both will enjoy the liveliness and antics of a set of quadruplets, three boys and a girl. Egon, their older brother, a boy of four, was led to expect one sibling and is all the more startled when he is suddenly confronted with four invaders. And they do invade the hearts and minds not only of their family, but also of all others they come in contact with.

The four little "Frogs"—that is how they have been nicknamed—have found the secret of living together: What happens to one happens to all four—by sharing with each other, every possession is quadrupled. By sticking together, their strength is fourfold, and united they brave any and all dangers, their older brother, the landlord, schoolteachers, exams, and even a fire. With their own battle song, "We are all together and we are not afraid," they prevent a panic in school, get a writeup in the local paper and become the heroes of the community. All this seems psychologically justified. They know no sibling rivalry, they feel like *one*.

There are some less satisfying aspects of the book. For instance, the role of the *one girl* among the four—she does not want to be different, so she wears pants like the boys; she wants to be admitted to the boys' school or the boys will have to attend the girls' school because they are inseparable. And they win by making a breach into the school system: "Exceptionally gifted girls" will be admitted from then on.

When will Lisel accept the fact that there is a difference, that their ways will have to separate some day? Her actual problems will come later. And what about the older brother? His resentment and hostility must be much greater than shown. Nor would a real Egon be able to compensate for those feelings by merely being a model child, a perfectionist with a few obsessional traits. He is an outsider throughout the story. The four-some pity him because he has not even a twin, nor has the author given him any friends whom he could "gang up" with against the Four. And his parents are quite indifferent to his problems. One feels that here is a tragedy in the making which the author has brushed aside, in spite of her otherwise very good psychological insight. However, it must be kept in mind that the book was written primarily for children, who will undoubtedly enjoy it very much as the charming story that it is. Moreover, this book is more than mere entertainment; it can be used even as a projective test.

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