BOOK REVIEW

THEORETICAL PHYSICS IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY. A Memorial volume to Wolfgang Pauli. Edited by M. G Fierz and V. F. Weisskopf. Price $10.00. Interscience Publishers, Inc. N.Y.

By raising a memorial monument to a great man-, we do hero worship, the psychological value of which is unquestionable, though the educative value of which is not often so clear. On the other hand, a memorial volume well contributed is on an altogether different footing. It may sometimes be questioned that such contributions if meant to be expositions of the works of a master are likely to be strongly tinged by the biases of the man, and may not be truly critical of the drawbacks or inadequacies of the teachings. But this can hardly be helped for a time when this is the only light in obscurity. Indeed, Paulis' work brought light and logic in the domain of "classical" quantum theory of the atom which was a strange hybrid between classical electrodynamics and Planck's quantum hypothesis. To quote the words of the other great master Niels Bohr "it was a great comfort when new developments met with his approval. At the same time as the anecdotes around his personality grew into a veritable legend, he more and more became the very conscience of the theoretical physicists". It shows how deeply and widely Pauli's personality and wisdom made themselves felt in the world of Physics and the homages rendered to this great scientist in this volume are never so apt or intrinsic. On the other hand, many of the contributors to this memorial volume are themselves considered to be so many pillars of the grand edifice of modern Quantum Mechanics and thus each article, as one rightly expects, brings fresh thought and exposition to the reader and is delightful and thought-provoking reading.

When we pay homage to a great man we do good to ourselves. We drink at the fountain of knowledge and inspire ourselves to greater efforts. Each article in this volume has a special value in reference to Pauli as well as to the author of the article.

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