

PREFACE

The dry material, which may be associated with the word « norm », is in fact a rich mine of realities. At a first glance, many a reader of this volume may have a reaction, with which even those responsible for risking this theme for an Eranos Conference were not totally unfamiliar. However, the problems it raises touch on the very foundation of contemporary social life, which, more than any before it, queries the authority of the past.

In accordance with an unwritten « norm » of Eranos Conferences, the major religions of Asia and Europe, Greek thought and contemporary psychology were once again subjects that found expression in the 1974 Eranos lectures, published in the 43rd Yearbook. As part of this norm our inquiry must per force also extend to the everlasting human urge to transgress self-imposed limits.

We would hope that this series of lectures will be evidence that our search for norms is not intended to lead to definitive solutions. Permanent values are not those which appear to be the most urgent at any given place or time. What must be borne in mind is man's enduring need to provide his existence with a meaningful frame of reference by searching for new norms in the light of changing situations. This requirement is related to the basic principles, which govern Eranos Conferences, i.e., to promote the search for new norms, while preserving knowledge related to a fixed point in time, by looking at historical events and by keeping a perspective on those to come.

To our great regret financial constraints compelled us to reconsider the size of the Eranos Yearbook. In the light of these limitations we decided to cease publication of the bilingual summaries of individual articles as from this volume. In this manner it is possible to devote the available space fully to the authors' original contributions.

Basel and Ascona, September 1976

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