

provided him with some of the impulse, and some of the tools, to weld his complex theological heritage into a new and more systematic unity" (p. 178). Understandably enough, this is the most difficult part of the book. The author realises that the "theologically-minded reader" will be tempted to skip it (p. ix). But the effort must be made by those who want to see how it is that "post-Plotinian cosmology and logic are what make Arius an 'heresiarch'" (p. 231). The book concludes with a theological "Postscript" and an appendix of credal documents with brief commentary.

This book will richly reward the effort required to read it, again and again.

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AESTHETICS: AN INTRODUCTION TO THE PHILOSOPHY OF ART, by Anne Sheppard: *O.U.P., Oxford 1987. £4.95 paperback, £15 hardback.*

An introductory book is, at least in philosophy, the most difficult of all to write. If one attempts to cover the whole field in a book of reasonable size each discussion will be too thin; if one covers too few topics one fails to indicate the true scope. Further, a dispassionate account of the merits and demerits of a series of common views is not likely to be as interesting as a passionate attack or defence of one of them. That is why philosophy tutors tend to start their pupils on one of the great original thinkers.

But there is a place for introductions and Anne Sheppard has made a very good attempt at this difficult task in the field of aesthetics. The second, third and fourth chapters, after a brief introductory chapter are entitled *Imitation, Expression, and Form*; they are brief delineations of three well known theories of the essential nature of a work of art. One simply cannot convey the interest and excitement to be found in Croce's and Collingwood's own statements of their expressionistic thesis in a chapter of twenty pages which also includes more general matter on the topic of expression, or bring out the intellectual stature of Kant's aesthetics in part of a chapter of eighteen pages; but Ms. Sheppard does her task very well and even manages to include a few telling original thoughts of her own. I have only one serious quarrel with this part of the book. Throughout the chapter on the theory that art is essentially a form of imitation or representation Ms. Sheppard takes Plato as her representative philosopher among those holding this view. In the sense given to 'mimesis' in the early books of the *Republic* mimetic poetry is clearly only one of two types while in Book X he specifically says that his attack is on 'such poetry as is mimetic' and names types of poetry, such as hymns to the gods, that are to be permitted because not mimetic. There is, so far as I know, no 'theory of art' such as Croce and Kant had in mind in the works of Plato. This choice of Plato is the more unfortunate in that the arguments of this chapter are otherwise very well presented.

The latter part of the book is more exciting. It is devoted mainly to a discussion of literature and discusses such topics as criticism, the validity of rival interpretations, evaluation, the relevance of the author's intentions, the notion of artistic truth, and the relation of literary merit to morality. These topics allow some unity to the discussion and Ms. Sheppard clearly is deeply interested and communicates her enthusiasm to the reader; she manages to speak for herself and still inform the reader about many standard views on these topics.

This, then, is about as good an introduction to aesthetics as one could hope for. It is clear and lacks the pretentious parade of superior artistic sensitivity that mars so much writing on aesthetics. If I raise one further issue it is not an adverse criticism of the book, but a philosophical doubt. In general Ms. Sheppard is a unifier; she believes that what is true of one art is true of all arts after obvious adjustments are made and she believes that the fact that we do not have any single term of aesthetic appraisal appropriate to all contexts is not very significant. She may be right; but it is by no means clear to me that the class of works of art is to be defined in any interesting way or even that the poems of, say, Dryden share anything very interesting with those of, say, Blake; also one is sometimes inclined to think that it would be absurd, not just unidiomatic, to call some great works of art beautiful.

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