

continually re-surface. One is that Flanagan seems to regard late modernity, or what Bauman had called 'liquid modernity' ('the melting down and lack of solidification of what passes in contemporary culture' p. 45) as, *tout court*, the determinant of contemporary secular and religious change, while a strong case could also surely be made for the hegemonic parity, at least, of both globalization and the fundamentalist polarities invoked by the so-called 'clash of civilizations'. Similarly, not all sociologists – or indeed theologians – would accept Flanagan's somewhat arbitrary division 'between the seen, as shaped in culture, and the unseen, as discerned through spiritual means' (p. 3). Durkheim, for one, often seems to argue that the unseen is culturally determined too, while art history is replete with examples of painters envisaging and depicting an 'unseen' Heaven with unnerving cultural specificity.

Thirdly, while Flanagan's critique of the anti-aesthetic subtext in Weber's 'Protestant Ethic' is certainly sustainable, he seems almost wilfully blind to evidence of any long-standing *visual* aesthetic within Protestantism itself. Dürer's woodcuts, Shaker furniture, some Pre-Raphaelites, even Ruskin himself, seem to pass him by. Indeed the latter's crucial role (as Michael Wheeler has shown) in promoting a 'Protestant Aesthetic' of seeing and believing, whether through viewing Nature or Italianate Catholic art, was integral to middle class Victorian religiosity. Similarly, although Flanagan makes a strong case for Catholic theology's crucial role in shaping Christian visual experience, he fails to acknowledge how, in the last two hundred years, the resultant art-work rarely advanced beyond mere *bondieuserie*. Finally, although one of Flanagan's primary objectives – to re-order and re-direct sociological and theological sensibilities in a more overtly ocular direction – is an increasingly urgent and important one, it could be argued that his focus on the visual *per se* is at the expense of any wider discussion of the sensory in general, and both the aural (e.g. musical form and expression) and the oral (food and drink) in particular. Such a discussion might well have lent more breadth and empirical support for Simmel's own firm contention – cited here by Flanagan – that 'art empowers the soul to supplement one world with the other and thereby to experience itself at the point of union' (p. 174)

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WITTGENSTEIN, AESTHETICS AND PHILOSOPHY edited by Peter B. Lewis, Ashgate, Aldershot, 2004, Pp. 255, £49.50 hbk.

On the inside cover of this collection of twelve essays it is claimed that Wittgenstein's work in aesthetics has been 'unjustly neglected.' This may give the misleading impression that Wittgenstein has had relatively little influence on the subject, a claim made more plausible by the fact that this is the first book devoted exclusively to his aesthetics. Whilst it is true that Wittgenstein wrote relatively little on aesthetics, mostly remarks scattered throughout his corpus and notes taken from lectures, it is his broader philosophical views, ostensibly not dealing with aesthetic issues, which have been the basis of his profound influence on post-war Anglophone philosophy of art. For example, modern discussions on questions such as the definability of art, the role of theory in criticism and appreciation, and the nature of aesthetic experience have been greatly influenced by Wittgenstein's writings on family resemblance, language games and private experience.

What is seriously neglected, however, is the question of the relationship between positions in aesthetics arrived at using ideas such as these, and what we are able to infer of his own views on the particular aesthetic questions that

his ideas were used to illumine. From the lecture notes taken by students we know he had strong opinions about aesthetics. Indeed, he once wrote that only conceptual and aesthetic questions really gripped him. Therefore, what is unjustly neglected is the question of the extent to which positions in aesthetics often termed 'Wittgensteinian' are really Wittgensteinian, a question this volume should help clarify.

This is particularly well illustrated by Terry Diffey in his essay on Wittgenstein, anti-essentialism and the definition of art. The question, 'What is art?', a question seen for centuries as central to aesthetics, was one conspicuous by its absence in the writings of Wittgenstein. However, Wittgenstein had argued that many concepts are 'family resemblance' concepts, concepts which belong to certain classes in virtue of overlapping resemblances among the members of the class and not due to any common defining features. If the concept 'work of art' is supposed to apply to objects as different as a canvas by Poussin and Duchamp's paint-daubed urinal, there seemed little hope of identifying defining properties common to all works of art. The idea of family resemblance provided an alternative avenue of explanation. However, this was often taken much further, even to the point of arguing that the concept of art is barely intelligible, ridding aesthetics of theory and reducing it to a form of behaviourism. Diffey shows convincingly, using textual evidence, that this goes far beyond Wittgenstein's own position, for whom 'art,' was an intelligible and serviceable concept, even if not reducible to necessary and sufficient conditions.

Even if the rest of the essays address to a lesser degree the issue of whether positions commonly regarded as Wittgensteinian can really be claimed to be so, they nevertheless contribute to the debate by focusing on Wittgenstein's life and texts in addressing questions in the areas where he has been most influential. The conclusions they arrive at tend to agree with the general position also found in Diffey's essay, that what characterises Wittgenstein's positions in aesthetics is his rejection of reductive accounts of aesthetic concepts and experience, whilst accepting that there are grounds for normativity. Graham McFee, for instance, shows clearly in his essay that there is good textual support for the view that for Wittgenstein norms in art are neither a matter of the whim of any person, society or institution, nor are they independent of the contexts created by them. Yet Ilham Dilman, disapproving of much modern art, can argue on Wittgensteinian grounds that societies and institutions can be systematically wrong in their aesthetic judgements when they canonise works of art which fail to enlarge one's appreciation of reality. Indeed, as Mark W Rowe argues in his essay on criticism without theory, it was Wittgenstein's great insight regarding criticism to perceive that in practice aesthetic judgement uses a reasoning of a non-inductive and non-deductive kind, with critical discourse being principally concerned with enabling people to see in certain ways and to grasp insights. Such discourse will be a complex and dynamic interaction of conditioned personal response to non-evaluative properties of the work of art, whilst not being reducible to either. Criticism is seen as being more about persuasion and exhortation, than strict reasoning.

In addition to the essays already discussed, attention should be brought to the insightful contributions by RA Sharpe and Oswald Hanfling on Wittgenstein's aesthetics of music, and Carolyn Wilde's fine and detailed essay on Wittgenstein's remark, 'Ethics and Aesthetics are one and the same.' As a collection, the essays are generally of high quality and cover the main areas where Wittgenstein's influence is most felt. What makes this volume a particularly valuable one, though, is the attention given to Wittgenstein's writings and the evidence drawn from his life. It is therefore an important point of reference for what one can really say about Wittgenstein's views on art.

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