

SPINOZA. By Stuart Hampshire. (Faber and Faber; 15s.)

INITIATION À LA PHILOSOPHIE D'ARISTOTE. By M.-D. Philippe, O.P.
(La Colombe; n.p.)

There is an advantage in treating these two very different books together. In the first place, both are very clear and concise summaries of the doctrines of great philosophers. Mr Hampshire's is a new edition of a book written for the Penguin Philosophy series in 1951, and now produced in what the publishers claim is a more permanent form. The matter is treated very pleasantly and very fairly, and as fully as one could wish from a book that does not claim to be a commentary on texts. A just and informative picture of Spinoza and his work emerges. Père Philippe's book suffers a little in comparison here. It strikes one as a little odd that sixty pages are devoted to the *Metaphysics* while thirty suffice to cover the whole *Organon*, and that forty pages do equally for the *Ethics* and for the complete series of works on natural philosophy. Indeed, the interest of the various parts of his work to Aristotle himself does not emerge clearly. The account is admirably concise, admirably clear, admirably full except in the logical works; but it often seems to remain an account solely of what was said, without sufficient attempt in depth to explain *why* it was said. The judgments passed upon Aristotle are mainly upon Aristotle in relation to his predecessors, judgments largely drawn from those Aristotle himself makes.

Here a second comparison of Mr Hampshire and Père Philippe is possible: both are a little too indulgent towards their subjects. Père Philippe introduces a friend: one is almost told to be interested in the matter because it is what Aristotle said, whatever its philosophical interest. Mr Hampshire's indulgence shows itself in a more provoking manner, in a certain childish agreement, reminiscent of the Rationalist Press, with Spinoza's extremist views on free will, or the non-existence of a God separate from Nature. He can write that Spinoza's greatness lay 'in the exaltation of the powers of reason and of rational methods at the expense of blind faith, supernatural revelation and theological mystery'; where it appears that these last terms must be taken for granted as opprobrious. The book sometimes cloaks sheer prejudices like these in a mantle of enlightened plausibility, and whatever we think of this it is certainly not philosophy. One example of this attitude vitiates almost the entire book under one aspect. The book is useful, we are told, as an examination of the 'pretensions' of metaphysics (the quoted word reveals the mental attitude), for these achieve an extreme form in the work of Spinoza. But surely if one wished sincerely to weigh the claims of metaphysics one would start with the moderate metaphysician. In fact, what Mr Hampshire calls an extremist metaphysician Aristotle, for example, would not call a metaphysician at all

(if the anachronism will be pardoned). Aristotle would have used the term 'sophist' or 'dialectician', a man for whom *unity* had usurped the place of *being* as the criterion of intelligibility. Despite these criticisms the reviewer will keep both these books on his shelves: Mr Hampshire's as the best book known to him on Spinoza, Père Philippe's as an excellent *aide-memoire* to what Aristotle said and where he said it.

TIMOTHY McDERMOTT, O.P.

THE NEW OUTLINE OF MODERN KNOWLEDGE. Edited by Alan Pryce-Jones. (Gollancz; 18s.)

There can be no doubt that Mr Pryce-Jones has succeeded in his unenviable task. Instead of producing yet another encyclopaedia of true but uninteresting information, he has inspired the majority of his contributors to discover principles from which the facts can be judged. This presumably is what he means by saying that the book 'has a bias which can loosely be called philosophical', intending by this 'the study of the meanings of things'. Whether 'ordinary people will find it a little easier henceforth to understand the world around them' is uncertain. Some of the authors demand in their readers rather more than uninformed intelligence.

The first of the five sections is on philosophy. Dr Holloway gives a clear account of modern analytic philosophy, and includes some detailed analyses: nothing could be better for bringing old-fashioned philosophers to the light. Professor Zaehner, writing on the religious instinct, deals largely with the relationship of the historical religions to the new 'secular religions', fascism and marxism. The contemporary relevance of this theme typifies what is best in this collection; informed writing that is not in the least 'academic'. The remaining two essays attempt too much in their brief summaries of philosophical positions, and in one of them Dr Hawkins by assimilating the word 'being' to the word 'red' does just what the doctrine of analogy which he is describing was intended to avoid.

The second section on science may well be the one most readily understood by the general public; the technicalities of science are such as to demand popular treatment. Here again the best essays aim beyond the mere presentation of facts to draw out their significance. Thus Professor Zangwill gives us insight into the methods and limitations of experimental psychology, ending with a short and critical though by no means unsympathetic appraisal of analytic methods. In a similar way Professor Waddington has a clear account of the complex subject of genetics, and Mr Beattie explains the attitude and techniques of the social anthropologist, whose subject has so recently yet deservedly attained scientific status. These writers have style, not in the narrow