

aired, and the old boggy of the 'unities' is briefly and successfully laid. The chapter on 'Catharsis and Emotions' keeps strictly to Aristotle's terms of investigation, which is perhaps a little disappointing, though after all it is only in the terms of the original contract. It is also a little disappointing to have such a brief discussion of *mimesis* and find no mention of W. F. Trench's slight but valuable work on the subject. These, however, are small blemishes on what must be one of the best modern commentaries on the *Poetics*.

GERARD MEATH, O.P.

THE ART OF DRAMA. By Ronald Peacock. (Routledge and Kegan Paul; 25s.)

Criticism of the drama falls mainly into two kinds, that which considers primarily its form as literature, either historically or socially, or related to contemporary theory; and that which records the living drama in performance. In the present work Professor Peacock breaks new ground. Keenly aware as he is of the union of several arts, forms and personal factors in drama, he seeks 'either a single aesthetic principle for all the arts, or at least a principle that accounts for their aesthetic association in composite forms'. The definition of form immediately springs to mind for this purpose, for, as Ernest Cassirer says, 'If art is enjoyment, it is not the enjoyment of things, but the enjoyment of forms'. Professor Peacock, however, looking for the common factor which is not restricted to words or literary forms, chooses rather to define and examine imagery as the guiding thread in the labyrinth.

Leaving aside, broadly speaking, the 'scientific copy-image', of blue-print nature, which deals with objects and not appearances or emotional colourings, he defines the genesis and organization of the image-patterns which make up pictures, music and poetry. The close analogy between poetry and the visual arts is often cited in aesthetics, and Professor Peacock has perhaps less to contribute in this field than some of his colleagues. His stronger contribution is in his discussion of music, the contrast of non-representational art which it embodies. He offers strong provocation to the purist among music critics when he explains how 'a formula of imagery without representational significance, or object references, or verbal associations, can be accepted as meaningful because it corresponds to feelings, the link between the two seemingly opposed types of imagery being that both are concerned with constructs of the imagination'.

He then proceeds to the all-embracing definition which is the ambitious aim of the book: 'Art is experience re-enacted as idea, a formula of imagery, or imagery-within-language, being the instrument of re-enactment'. Using this as a working definition, he makes a

somewhat cursory survey of art in relation to experience, the psychological preparedness in artist and audience, etc., having avowed his pre-occupation with the aesthetic contexts of imagery rather than with the processes of knowledge. The 'bridge-passage' to the final consideration of the art of drama is the chapter called 'Music and Poetry', which explores the alliance of poetry and musical expression, auditory and vocal, through the composer and the poet and the speaker. The full consideration of drama picks up the points elaborated in the first nine of the total of eleven chapters, and treats of dramatic speech, dramatic imagery, plot, costume, indeed all the elements of the play in performance. There is wide reference to the drama of many periods and countries, and some particularly interesting comments on contemporary dramatists such as Eliot, Cocteau and Giraudoux. The visual aspects of the play, as connected with the imagery from the visual arts, receive rather less than full justice, as does also the technique of the actor and of the intermediary—the producer—at a time when the terms 'a producer's play' or 'an actor's play' are in general, if often too glib, usage.

Professor Peacock is an exacting theatre-goer if the play that emerges as fulfilling his conditions is to be 'a picture and a music; a poetic image and a ritual; an illumination and a catharsis; an excitement in life and a serenity above it; a re-enactment in sense and a liberation in idea'. But his progress towards this lofty peroration, if labyrinthine in method, with something too much of recoil and recapitulation, is a provocative one in comparative studies of the arts. To argue and to disagree is to be challenged, and challenge is an important one among the critic's functions.

ELIZABETH SWEETING

LEFTOVER LIFE TO KILL. By Caitlin Thomas. (Putnam; 18s.)

This book tempts to sarcasm. Yet it is a sad book and the need for its publication is a pity. It contains some memories of Dylan Thomas but the larger part is an account of Mrs Thomas's widowhood, in America, in Wales, then on an island in Italy, where there is a tangled love affair with a young man called Joseph. Mrs Thomas writes English not very grammatically, but with verve and emotion. She spits loquacious contempt at convention and whispering public opinion and bourgeois morals, whether Italian or Welsh. She convinces herself that she feels deeply and that she is intensely alive. So she goes on like a female Jimmy Porter and her book looks back in anger. That and the pity of it must be its excuse.

SAUNDERS LEWIS