

linguistic analysis of the concept of a value-judgment in general, together with some applications to the particular judgment that things or actions are good. His whole argument, moreover, depends on a sharp formalist distinction between value-judgments and judgments on matters of fact, and he is inhibited from submitting this idea in turn to a really searching analysis.

Ethics and meta-ethics mix explosively in Mrs Krook's book. It is based on lectures given for the English Moralists course in the English Faculty at Cambridge (where the ranking 'English Moralists' include Plato, St Augustine and D. H. Lawrence). Under the guise of examining a dozen of these authors she has written an increasingly torrential lay sermon on the redemptive power of sexual love. She follows Matthew Arnold in trying to secure some sort of Christian attachment for her Humanism, and in consequence over-rates his empty sloganizing: most of the other subjects she trims ruthlessly to fit her pattern.

What is worth reading is Mrs Krook's argument for including literary *style* in the interpretation of a philosophy, on the grounds that every great philosophical system is also a statement of a highly personal interpretation of reality. She claims that in consequence the 'developed literary sensibility' can distinguish valuably between different kinds and qualities of philosophical achievement. She certainly includes a good deal of literary criticism in her book; but I should be happier in thinking that she had made good her claim if I could fathom her use of 'valid' as a fundamental critical term. Her own style is splendid: it reproduces the vivacity of a good lecture with a directness I have never met before. In contrast Mr Montefiore is cautious and tentative to a degree that is at once engaging and confusing. In still further contrast, Dr Ewing's book—partly a sequel and partly a revision of his well-known *The Definition of Good*—has the difficult dry clarity of a professional writing for professionals.

What is a book on Godel's theorem doing with these others? One of the arguments often used to support the formalist distinction between evaluation and description is that whereas judgments on matters of fact are uncontroversial, value-judgments are essentially controversial. Now mathematics has always been taken to be the very pattern of what is uncontroversial. What Godel showed, by analysing the notion of mathematical proof, was that not even the truths of arithmetic are in principle all accessible to uncontroversial demonstration—i.e. he showed that even the most elementary part of mathematics is essentially controversial! Godel's theorem incidentally shows that it is impossible to keep up a sharp distinction between doing mathematics and theorizing about mathematics: its lesson for moral philosophers is that the parallel separation of moral philosophy from moral teaching cannot be kept up indefinitely.

TIMOTHY SMILEY

A CONCISE HISTORY OF MODERN PAINTING. By Herbert Read. (Thames and Hudson; 28s.)

It is a paradox that these most popular Art Books begin to sell chiefly for their coloured reproductions (which are shockingly bad) rather than for their text (which in this case is perceptive, informative and surprisingly comprehensive for so concise a book). It is surely time that so responsible a firm as Thames and Hudson should refuse to inoculate the public eye with such gross distortions; distortions which if they were lineal would make even the most ignorant of laymen cry out in protest. The chief glory of so many painters is

one of colour which informs the quality of their design, and when this is so travestied, as it is here, all is lost and several hundred thousand people have been misinformed.

Sir Herbert Read's text covers a wide area. He calls the book 'a synopsis of existing knowledge' and points out how the law of art history is one of continually recurring reaction rather than of progress; the outstanding artist seemingly born out of the blue, from whose genius springs a school doomed to decay.

Sir Herbert places the beginning of modern art with Cézanne, who in the long history of art was the first to see the world objectively, 'an object uncoloured by the bright but deceptive picture presented by the kaleidoscope of the senses', and in the course of his book, dealing with over four hundred artists, he clarifies much of the tempestuous interlocking of schools since that time.

It is to be regretted that he has not included the work of David Jones amongst British artists. Its timeless nature gives emphasis and balance to the movement of modern painting as a whole. It is odd too that since, in this book on painting, he includes the work of Brancusi (represented curiously enough by a cast which may never have been seen by Brancusi himself), he should not also mention so important and vital an influence as that of Henri Gaudier Brzeska.

There are many excellent notes at the end of the book, a helpful bibliography and careful cataloguing.

H. S. EDE

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO THOMAS. Coptic Text Established and Translated by A. Guillaumont *et al.* (Collins; 18s.)

By now most people know that the so-called *Gospel of Thomas* is one of the most important of the forty-nine Gnostic treatises discovered by chance in 1945 at Nag Hamadi in Upper Egypt. In its final form it comprises a collection of what purport to be about 114 'Sayings of Jesus' translated into Coptic from a much older Greek version, which was apparently written about 140 A.D. Strongly Gnostic in outlook, this Greek prototype had apparently absorbed, adapted and added to two still more ancient and less Gnostic collections of sayings, the earlier of which may stand very near indeed to the authentic tradition of our Lord's teaching, and to the pre-gospel traditions on which the authors of our canonical gospels are known to have drawn.

A full critical edition of *The Gospel of Thomas* is to be published in the near future. Meanwhile the team of scholars officially engaged on the task provide an excerpt from their forthcoming work: a transcription of the Coptic text itself, with parallel English translation, to furnish their fellow scholars with 'a preliminary working tool for purposes of instruction and research'. The work has been admirably done, and will certainly achieve the limited objective of the authors. But for their interpretation and their answer to the many questions of burning interest to which this discovery has given rise, the layman will have to wait a little longer, until the complete work appears.

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