

East and West. Important questions about the direction of aesthetics and the purpose of continuing study are addressed and provide optimism for the intercultural connections that many of the authors explicitly hope for. Although, to be fair, there appears to be a slight bias toward Eastern approaches to aesthetics throughout the text. One reason may be that Eastern approaches are based in 'living' practices that are usually open-ended and allow for change and adaptation, whereas Western aesthetics is somewhat limited by epistemology and metaphysical complications. Nevertheless, the anthology can be seen to be issuing a warning that unless the West continues to open its eyes to Eastern systems of thought, it cannot achieve a sufficient level of productive sophistication.

To the credit of the editors, several articles also discuss the flow of Western ideas into the East that could be of use, such as relaxing the formulaic restrictions of Eastern art and calling for more abundant expression from individual and original sources. Most dramatically, the anthology highlights the idea that sensibility to one's own aesthetic filter is an attribute profoundly affected by cultural incubation and an attribute most often lacking from the first-person perspective. This collection thus reminds us of not only the importance of engaging each other at a higher level of awareness, but also that so doing requires acknowledging the philosophical, psychological, and emotional building blocks of our aesthetic engagement and being willing to face our own impediments.

DREW PHILBECK

Florida State University, USA

drew.philbeck@yahoo.com

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*An Introduction to Kant's Aesthetics: Core Concepts and Problems.* By CHRISTIAN HELMUT WENZEL. Blackwell. 2005. pp. xiv. + 183 £50.00 (hbk), £16.99 (pbk).

CHRISTIAN Wenzel has accomplished a difficult task: he has written a book that will actually help the non-specialist to understand

the principal concepts and arguments of Kant's *Critique of Aesthetic Judgement*.

The difficulty of such a task may be put thus: if the author uses his work to defend his particular solutions to the main interpretative problems of the text against rival solutions, then his work will not be an introductory one but one for scholars; if, on the other hand, he offers the solutions but omits to defend them—or, worse, proffers an interpretation without taking account of the problems at all—then he misleads his readers into thinking the text simpler than it is; finally, if he presents the problems but offers no solutions, he runs the risk of discouraging the beginner from making any further effort to understand the text.

Wenzel's solution to this problem is, as is probably inevitable, a compromise. He deals with a selection of interpretative problems and presents, with appropriate textual support, solutions that should ease the perplexity of the novice reader of the text but without imparting a false sense of conclusiveness. For those interested in competing interpretations, each section of the book is followed by a generously annotated bibliography. These bibliographies, it should be mentioned, show the author's acquaintance with scholarly literature in several European languages.

The organization of Wenzel's book mainly follows that of Kant's text, proceeding first through the four 'moments' of the judgement of taste, then through the 'deduction' of such judgements, the account of fine art and genius, and the reference of aesthetic judgement to morality and the supersensible, under which topic is included Kant's account of judgements of sublimity. A final chapter departs from textual commentary to address the questions of whether Kant's theory can accommodate pure aesthetic judgements of ugliness and whether it can allow for beauty and genius in mathematics (which, as a 'Foreword' by Henry Allison mentions, is the subject of one of the author's two doctoral degrees). Thus, although the book purports to be an introduction to the 'core concepts and problems' of Kant's aesthetics,

it is in fact—as indeed it should be—an introduction to the core concepts and problems of Kant's principal piece of *writing* in aesthetics.

Among the strengths of Wenzel's book is the fact that the author commands German as his first language—not that one would guess this from the body of the book. (A counter-instance may be the unintentionally amusing note in which the author commends a certain publication for bringing 'fresh wind' into the scholarly discussion.) With regard to certain terms, such as 'moment' and 'cognition in general', I believe that even some English-speaking authors of scholarly publications on Kant's aesthetics would stand to benefit from reading what Wenzel has to say. For the novice, a glossary of Kantian terminology is provided, as well as a summary of the *Critique of Aesthetic Judgement*, and indeed a *very* compressed summary of the history of aesthetics from its beginnings to immediately after Kant.

As mentioned earlier, an introductory work cannot possibly deal with all the complexities of such a text as Kant's. On occasion, however, Wenzel arguably strays across the ill-defined border between simplification and oversimplification. An instance may be found in his treatment of Kant's section 9, the one containing the so-called 'key to the critique of taste'. Here, Kant poses the question 'whether in a judgement of taste the feeling of pleasure precedes the judging of the object or the latter precedes the former'. An obvious question to be raised about the question itself is what manner of 'precedence' is at issue here. Wenzel asserts, first, that Kant is not asking about an empirical or temporal order. This claim is by now received doctrine among Kant commentators. But he goes on to infer, with the glib assurance of analytic philosophers of an earlier generation, that the order is therefore a 'logical' one. Even if we take 'logical' here to embrace analytic or conceptual implication, the conclusion cannot stand in the absence of an explanation of how the concept of the judging of the object in a judgement of taste implies the concept of pleasure. At least one interpreter, Hannah

Ginsborg, has offered such an account, but Wenzel does not even acknowledge the need for one.

I would stress, however, that this sort of failing is not common in the book. Taken as a whole, this is a scrupulously argued and lucidly written commentary on Kant's *Critique of Aesthetic Judgement* that should make that text more accessible to students and to those without specialized knowledge of Kant's philosophy.

MILES RIND

Cambridge, MA, USA

*m.rind@verizon.net*

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*Between Transcendence and Historicism.* By BRIAN K. ETTER. SUNY Press. 2006. pp. 259. £42.50 (hbk), £15.50 (pbk).

THE PRINCIPAL purpose of this book is to offer a sympathetic explication of the main features of Hegel's aesthetics. At the same time it sets out to plead for the contemporary relevance of Hegelian aesthetic theory in opposition to a certain construal of modernist aesthetics in the twentieth century. While the Introduction establishes the basic terms of debate, Part I elaborates on what the author considers to be the necessary balance struck within Hegel's aesthetics between historicist relativism and idealist absolutism. Hegel's position is contrasted unfavourably with what is held to be a complete capitulation to relativism and abrogation of all tradition on the part of aesthetic modernism (or occasionally 'postmodernism'). Parts II and III then proceed to give a detailed account of Hegel's analysis of the fundamental types of art (painting and sculpture, music, poetry, and architecture) and the relationship between art, ethics, and religion.

As a whole the text offers two quite different approaches. First, it can be read as a basic and perhaps introductory text to Hegel's aesthetics. Approached in this way the author has been largely successful. His writing is