

community. Pellicer tries, I think successfully, to avoid this pitfall. He summarizes some of his main points as follows (pp. 337–38):

Si l'on met à part quelques emplois aberrants, rares ou mal établis, *natura*, tel que nous le trouvons dans les textes à partir du 1^{er} siècle avant J.-C., ne comporte en fait qu'un petit nombre de sens principaux, exactement parallèles à ceux que présente *φύσις* au terme d'une évolution sémantique que nous avons retracée par ailleurs. Les deux sens les plus importants, par l'ampleur de leur signification virtuelle, par le nombre de leurs emplois, par le rôle qu'ils jouent dans la structure sémantique de *natura*, sont *natura*: «manière d'être», et *natura*: «univers». La grande majorité des exemples que l'on trouvera dans les textes se ramènent à l'un ou l'autre de ces deux sens ou les impliquent: c'est ainsi notamment que tous les emplois qui se rattachent à l'acception de «caractères innés», malgré leur importance historique et leur fréquence dans les textes, ne sont plus, une fois *natura* parvenu au stade définitif de son évolution, que des significations particulières du terme général *natura*: «manière d'être»; c'est à ce même sens, et à celui de *natura*: «univers», que se ramènent en dernière analyse bien des emplois abstraits du terme, et, entre autres, ceux où *natura*, cause de phénomènes particuliers ou cause universelle, ne représente qu'un ensemble de causes agissant spontanément. *Natura*, «caractères propres», avec ses nuances de «caractères originels» et «caractères normaux» est à la base même des notions abstraites qu'exprime *natura*, notions auxquelles le sens de «nature universelle» donne dans certains exemples une ampleur et une résonance singulières.

Pellicer convinces me that the really important point is the tenacious unity of the concept of *natura*, “*Natura* se ramène donc à un petit nombre de sens; mais c'est précisément un caractère essentiel du terme qu'il comporte plusieurs sens” (p. 339). He calls this unity the “structure sémantique” of the word, and says, “cette expression suppose qu'entre des emplois infiniment divers et parfois très éloignés, des significations complexes et mouvantes, on peut malgré tout définir des rapports intelligibles sinon simples, et finalement retrouver une unité.”

Pellicer thus poses an important problem for the lexicographers; we can only wait to

see how the editors of the *Thesaurus* and of the *Oxford Latin Dictionary* meet it.

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Tragedy and Philosophy. By WALTER KAUFMANN. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1968. Pp. xvii+388. \$6.95.

This is a perceptive, wide ranging, often exciting, sometimes frustrating study of the theory and practice of tragedy in the western world. The excitement stems principally from the author's numerous penetrating insights into the essential achievement of great tragic writers from Aeschylus to Hochhuth and into the thought of the significant theorists of tragedy from Aristotle to Hegel, Nietzsche, and Schopenhauer. The frustration arises from K.'s frequent tendency to allow his insights to stand as individual judgments by themselves without providing the clarification and substantiation that would turn them into rigorous demonstrations and from his failure, on occasion, to come to terms with the full range of possibilities in the material before him.

Since the book as a whole is a tribute to the author's impressive scholarly and critical virtuosity I should like to begin with an indication of those aspects of it which limit its effectiveness and then turn to the much larger area in which it provides intense and welcome illumination.

K.'s challenge to the Aristotelian and Platonic view of art as imitation illustrates some of the difficulties in his procedure. In his explicit attempt to improve upon Aristotle's definition of tragedy K. asserts that “Art is not imitation; whatever remains imitation is not art” and he goes on to state that art which is “the triumph of form over finitude, of concrete abstraction over chaos” is not “expression of what was there before, waiting to be expressed, but discovery of what was not there until it was discovered; it is creation” (p. 78). First, we may note that the implications of several key phrases in K.'s definition of art are not immediately clear to the reader and without rigorous definitions of important

terms it is impossible to test the validity of K.'s proposed definition.

Secondly, the doctrine of imitation which K. is clearly attacking is the one which equates the Greek term *mimesis* with mere "copying." However the work of Butcher, McKeon, and Verdenius has shown us that the Greek concept of *mimesis* has other, more significant senses and can be understood as the process of evoking, in Verdenius' words, "something of that higher realm of being which also glimmers through phenomenal reality" and, as such, is a process which "has an indirect relation to the essential nature of things."¹ Verdenius is speaking here of the Platonic view of art, but when we recall the great emphasis in chapter 4 of the *Poetics* on *mimesis* as a form of inference and learning and the famous statement in chapter 9 that poetry is "more philosophical and significant than history" we can see that Aristotle, too, had a concept of *mimesis* that far transcended the notion of mere copying. We would demand from K. here a much more exhaustive treatment of the classical concept of *mimesis* so that we may judge precisely the degree to which his own view differs from it.

The criticism that has been made in regard to K.'s discussion of art and imitation also is pertinent to the expression of his own definition of tragedy (p. 85) in which he substitutes a number of terms for the traditional Aristotelian concepts. Here, too, K. should have provided a thorough study of the range of meanings inherent in such Aristotelian concepts as *mimesis*, *katharsis*, and *spoudaios* so that we could compare and evaluate accurately both his and Aristotle's formulation of the definition of tragedy. The results of current scholarship on these concepts indicate that K.'s definition reflects a sensitive understanding of the requirements of tragedy but does not transcend Aristotle's definition.

It is when K. turns to a discussion of individual plays themselves and what he terms their "philosophical dimension" that he makes his most significant contribution in this book.

In K.'s formulation the philosophical dimension is the poet's communication of "his *experience of life*—the way he feels about man's condition, the way he sees the world." This is a dimension of literature which the best literary critics, whether they formally teach in departments of philosophy or philology, seek to explore but few achieve the success that K. demonstrates in this volume. It will not be possible to do full justice to the excellence of K.'s work in this area because it depends so much on the many fine individual insights into characters and themes that are found throughout his discussion of various plays. All we can do is point out representative examples of his judgments that are far superior to much criticism of tragedy that is widely regarded as authoritative.

Of the three great Greek tragedians Aeschylus has offered the most difficulty to interpreters. There continues to exist a strain of criticism which sees this poet as a primitive and backward thinker far out of line with the progressive scientific, philosophic, and religious thought of his contemporaries. K. shows fine insight into the Aeschylean world view when he insists upon the optimism of Aeschylus which is manifested in his "faith that catastrophes can and ought to be avoided" (p. 165). Such a view which takes into consideration the action of the final play of the *Oresteia* and the possibilities inherent in the gifts of Prometheus to man does rare justice to Aeschylus.

In regard to Sophocles, also, K. goes beyond vague and partial judgments that abound in the criticism of Greek tragedy and arrives at insights that strike the reader with their justice and accuracy. It is stimulating to read his analysis of the philosophical dimension of the *Oedipus Tyrannus* where he sees that Oedipus' blindness is symbolic of the human condition and where he explores the themes of human insecurity and ignorance, of human guilt and responsibility in a mature way that brings to the fore the profound questions at the heart of the drama. There is insight and justice too in K.'s excellent remark that in his work Sophocles "more and more . . . celebrated the defiant strength that, buffeted by

1. W. J. Verdenius, *Mimesis: Plato's Doctrine of Artistic Imitation and Its Meaning to Us* (Leyden, 1962), pp. 17-18.

overwhelming sorrows, suffering, disappointments, and despair, holds out, defiant in its self-respect and pride" (p. 239). K. properly concerns himself with dominant themes in the corpus of the poet's work and leads us toward valid and verifiable insights into the philosophical dimension of Sophoclean tragedy.

K. has equally valuable insights to offer in regard to Euripides, and here his judgments and analysis of Euripidean pessimism support the directions taken by much of the best recent criticism of that poet. K. is brilliantly perceptive in his discussions of contemporary tragedians such as Sartre, Brecht, and Hochhuth, and of later theorists of tragedy such as Nietzsche and Schopenhauer. His discussion of Hochhuth's *The Deputy* is especially to be recommended for its thorough and perceptive analysis of the problem of creating tragedy in our own time.

We may then judge K.'s exploration of the philosophical dimension of a number of significant tragedies an impressive success while we also sense that his series of intelligent analyses is not, in itself, the equivalent of a rigorous definition of tragedy. Still unanswered is the larger question of why the pattern of action in which a noble figure falls from happiness to misery through an error holds dominant authority among the forms of literature that have been fostered in western civilization.

The search for an answer to this question, like investigations into our physical and biological environment, is intimately connected with man's incessant drive to understand his own nature and the role he plays in the universe. It is a search that must and will continue as long as the answer is in doubt and the human condition seems to matter.

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Pindar: Selected Odes. Translated, with Interpretive Essays, by CARL A. P. RUCK and WILLIAM H. MATHESON. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1968. Pp. x+269. \$10.00.

This is a book marked by scorn and good intentions. The scorn is slightly artificial, felt

for a scholarship which is, for all its "accumulation of wrong ideas" (p. 14), not quite so philistine as it is here represented. The good intentions, however, are entirely real and chief among them is a resolve that Pindar's work shall be regarded always as poetry. Of the ideal translator, these translators say, "he has shared, as he thinks, the poet's vision and now will testify to what he has seen" (p. 11), and indeed, if this were all that was required, they would qualify. It is evident that the poetry of Pindar has been for them a kind of personal miracle, and their attempt is to convey and to share an experience like that of conversion. Unfortunately, however, revelation resists restatement, just as Pindar's odes defy translation, and what imprints itself upon this book is chiefly the enthusiasm, the *entêtement* even, as they themselves might say (being fond of the foreign expression), of two young men who have heard the voice of Pindar though they cannot reproduce it.

The quality of the translations varies tremendously, and the collection becomes an unwitting record of how the two translators changed as they labored on. The versions are printed roughly in the order in which they were attempted and have confessedly not been much reworked (p. 13) and a curious development can be observed. First comes a ponderous *P. 4*, guilty of all the errors of literalism for which other translations have just been ridiculed in the rather cocky Introduction:

She spoke to captain Jason's crew of demigods:
"Hear me, sons of gods and of men stout-
hearted: I say
That from this land that breaks the sea
Epaphos' daughter will one day plant
Her root in the country where Zeus-Ammon is
established: men's care / [lines 13-16; p. 37],

and so on to the finish. Having seen, however, how accurate a passage of Hopkins is as a description of the Pindaric vision ("The world is charged with the grandeur of God," etc., cited p. 34), the translators soon attempt an early twentieth-century style, and for *O. 7. 7 ff.*, we get, "And I no less libation of nectar, this gift / Of Muses, pour, my mind's fruit / Delectable /," etc. (p. 61). By the time a few