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The Principles of Aesthetics. By Dewitt H. Parker

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the houses and customs of Jacopo's time and that luscious still-life sign boards are a striking local peculiarity.

These are but minor points. The essence of the matter is that we have in *Pots and Pans* a book of genuine, independent criticism. There is room on our library shelves for books of this kind on each of the branches of painting.

John Shapley

THE PRINCIPLES OF AESTHETICS. BY DEWITT H. PARKER. 8°, 374 PP.
BOSTON, SILVER, BURDETT & CO., 1920. \$2.50.

For general college use *The Principles of Æsthetics* by Parker is the most satisfactory English text-book on æsthetics so far produced. This judgment is pronounced not only with conviction but with gratitude, for the book fills a long felt need. In spite of serious and useful treatises on the subject—the learned, if intricate and difficult work of Bosanquet on the history of æsthetics, the brilliant, if one-sided, theories of Santayana, to mention only two examples—where was one to find a brief but comprehensive treatise which would embody what time and the continued studies of æstheticians have pronounced valuable in the theories of past and present, a treatise which would be, therefore, neither primarily historical nor primarily original, but which would give the consensus of modern thought in æsthetics? Perhaps the second volume of Knight's *Philosophy of the Beautiful* most nearly satisfied the need. But even here there is a tedious amount of historical material, and, particularly, the book is out of date; it does not take into account such important recent contributions as Croce's theory or the German theory of empathy. For the most part, our books in æsthetics stand in the same relation to college work as do most of those in the history of art: they are to be used as references rather than as texts.

Parker shows himself peculiarly well fitted for his task. A professor of philosophy, he is accustomed to logical and critical thinking. He is not merely inspired by some new, sensational theory, valuable as that might be in its way. To be sure, he does not lack original ideas, but they are the

fruit of the careful study and analysis of what has previously been done within the range of his subject. He does not hesitate to differ with his predecessors in the field, as when he points out the limitations of Croce's theories (pp. 16 and 21); nor does he hesitate—which is even greater credit to the scholar in this day of vaunted originality—to accept and make use of their theories, as he consciously or unconsciously does of Worringer's theory concerning the line (pp. 261 f.).

The general plan of the book is an investigation of æsthetics as a whole followed by an analysis and, incidentally, a comparison of the individual arts. The student is given a preliminary orientation by an explanation of the peculiarities of the methods required in the study of æsthetics. In this instance, as elsewhere, Parker cleverly makes use of the knowledge of science common to all modern students. In the very beginning the general prejudice in favor of the objective questions of science and the antipathy against the more subjective, personal questions of æsthetics are overcome. It is an interesting commentary upon the far-reaching influence of Croce's writings that such a treatment of æsthetics as Parker's, which one would describe as realistic, is yet colored at every turn by the theories of Croce, which may as truly be described as idealistic, based as the latter are upon the assumption that the object exists only as it is known (Croce, *Logica*, p. 120). Croce's definition of art as expression and intuition is adopted, but there are many divergencies in the interpretation of that definition. Two of these are particularly noteworthy. In the first place, Parker does not identify intuition (by which he means sympathetic insight) with expression but considers the former as the result of the latter (p. 38 ff.). In the second place, expression itself is given a different interpretation, or at least a different emphasis. For Croce the essential feature of expression lies in the mental activity; it makes no difference whether there is any embodiment in sensuous form. For Parker, on the other hand, the fundamental feature of expression is this very embodiment, "the putting forth of purpose, feeling, or thought into a sensuous medium, where they can

be experienced again by the one who expresses himself and communicated to others" (p. 16). "Self-expression that does not attain to objectivity is incomplete as art" (p. 42). In other words, while Croce distinguishes between art and what is commonly called the work of art (Croce, *Estetica*, ch. 15), Parker identifies the two.

After the development of the general æsthetic theory, Parker makes a concrete application of it in the study of the æsthetics of music, poetry, prose literature, painting, sculpture, and architecture. He begins with music because he believes that "there is a musical factor in all the arts" (p. 153). "Music," he writes, "is almost the sole important art that relies on the expressiveness of the sense material alone, independent of any element of meaning" (p. 160). Such expression produces an emotional response in the recipient which in its unmixed forms defies verbal expression. Apparently, it is this expressiveness of sense material that the author finds in some measure in all the arts, for it is explained early in the book that "we enter the æsthetic expression through the sensuous medium" (p. 28), and in the discussion of each of the arts the necessity, varying in importance, of the charm of the artist's medium is emphasized. The chapter on music is a good example of the thoroughness of Parker's studies of the various arts. Anything like a complete discussion of the technique of the arts would, of course, be out of place as well as impossible in such a book. Yet a brief outline of the technical construction, together with citations of detailed studies, is important for giving a solid framework on which to fasten the æsthetic interpretations.

The fact which "distinguishes music from all the other arts" is, according to Parker, that "it is characterized by the expression of emotion without the representation of the causes or objects of emotion" (p. 175). With poetry, which is classified as closely akin to music since "both are arts of sound and both employ rhythm as a principle of order in sound" (p. 188), we begin our departure from the realm of pure emotion into the realm of representation. Poetry supplies us with ideas; it "offers us concrete intuitions of life,—the rehearsal of emotions attached to real

things and clean-cut ideas" (p. 188). With painting and sculpture Parker takes us a step further, for they supply us, he says, with "definite images of nature" (p. 175). Our author makes it clear, however, that the value of painting and sculpture does not consist in imitation alone. He recognizes the joy we take in the colors, lines, and surfaces themselves. What he does not recognize is that the art of ornament, the most ancient and vital aspect of painting and sculpture, is not representative at all but is as abstract as music, along with which it should be placed. Moreover, in view of the modern development of the representative arts, especially that of painting, one feels that Parker has made the separation from music too rigid. The color nocturnes and symphonies of Whistler, the sparkling, scintillating canvases of Monet, are but slightly less pure expressions of emotion than is music. Even in the work of one of our most intellectual artists, Sargent, we may find a contradiction to Parker's contention that "with the static, concrete arts like painting and sculpture, it (music) will not fuse" (p. 181). No one who witnessed the recent unveiling of the Sargent decorations in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts could have failed to appreciate the enhancement lent both music and the two representative arts by their mutual accompaniment upon that occasion. There was plenty of allegorical and mythological significance in the painting and sculpture if one looked for it, but there was also so much of pure emotion in the flowing lines of the dancing figures, the rapid movements of centaur or satyr, and the bright, clear harmonies of colors that one felt much the same experience in following them as in listening to music. Parker's fundamental error in this matter grows out of his assumption that "the æsthetic experience of the picture is instantaneous and complete, while that of the music requires time for its development and fruition." "Hence," he says, "the two would soon fall apart, and a person would either have to ignore the music or cease to look at the picture" (p. 182).

The problem of beauty versus use is attacked in an interesting manner in the chapter on architecture. Aside from any beauty the industrial arts may have independently of their use, Parker emphasizes their beauty as expressed

in their usefulness: "And even if I do make use of the object, I may still get an æsthetic experience out of it, whenever I pause and survey it, delighting in it as an adequate expression of its purpose and my own joy in using it" (p. 299).

A book on æsthetics can hardly be considered complete without some discussion of the old problem of the relation of art to morality and religion, and this forms the subject of the last two chapters of our book. The puritan, the philistine, and the proletarian are allowed to present their charges against art as immoral, useless, and wasteful, and are given careful, well formulated answers. The chapter on art and religion is especially interesting, disclosing the parallel nature of the two: "The development of the relation of religion to life has been parallel to the development of art. Originally, religion penetrated every activity; now by contrast, it has been removed from one after another of the major human pursuits. . . . However, despite the separation of religion and art from life, they may continue to exert influence upon it. . . . In the case of both it consists in imparting to life a new meaning and perfection. . . . Art, the image of life, may now serve as a model, after which the latter, in its turn, will be patterned" (p. 350 ff.).

Although this review has emphasized the usefulness of Parker's treatise as a text-book, the volume is not to be thought of as a compilation of dry, factual material, a picture which, unfortunately, the word "text-book" calls up in the minds of many of us. What makes the present work appeal to us as peculiarly suitable for a text-book is its comprehensiveness, justness, balance, and clarity. There are none of the wearisome subdivisions, subheadings, or other earmarks of the confirmed text-book. The discussions are presented in a style that makes the reading attractive to anyone interested in the subject. Finally, even the few quotations given here are sufficient proof that the book is not lacking in original ideas nor in material for profitable discussion and controversy.

Fern Rusk Shapley