truth", not beauty—"Beauty is certainly not Art". That, of course, is true enough if by beauty is meant merely the sum of those qualities which please the eye, but if beauty is given its philosophical content of wholeness, harmony and radiance, it immediately becomes the major part of art, and comprises the entire intellectual element.

But Mr. Seago is not concerned overmuch with philosophy, although certain of his difficulties can only be solved on that basis. His chief concern is with light, atmosphere and colour, and here he has much of interest and importance to impart. In his opinion grey is the most abundant colour in Nature, not green, and in Great Britain that is so. It is the dominant greyness of the atmosphere which harmonizes colour in Britain to a degree unequalled anywhere else, and which gives to our landscape a quality of serenity and repose lacking in more arid climates. The whole book is full of notes on colour; indeed, one of its strongest points is the way in which the painter's vision is translated into terms the layman can understand. If the artist cannot make us see with his eyes he has done his best to tell us what to look for with our own.

The plates are uneven, for the simple reason that not all the originals are suitable for reproduction in monochrome. As a general rule, swift sketches done with a heavily charged brush do not come out as well as pictures with more finish. Apart from all other considerations, the impasto of the sketch is often a disturbing factor; examples are the spotty, 'pimple-faced' appearance of "White Sails" (facing p. 92), and the fussiness of "Sunlit Spire" (facing p. 113). It would have been better to have reduced the number of photographs to a half or even a quarter, and to have given four more coloured plates in their place. To do so would have added still further to the value of this interesting and stimulating book.

A. TINDELL HOPWOOD

PHILOSOPHY IN ACTION

Power and Events

An Essay on Dynamics in Philosophy. By Andrew Paul Ushenko. Pp. xxiii+301. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press; London: Oxford University Press, 1946.) 30s. net.

IT is becoming clear that, among its other characteristics, the present intellectual barometer, especially in the United States, is set for 'change' rather than for 'fair'. Supercharged clouds are racing across the horizon, and it would not, one imagines, take a great deal to bring the whole thing down in a deluge. The mental image produced by this book is of that kind. A storm is a grand sight, and the pages before us contain grand thoughts. Of that there can be no doubt; and what they have to say is something like this. Classical philosophy was static in ideal and timeless in form. We call it 'taking long views'. The breakaway to a species of romanticism, mixed with more than a trace of the empirical, has produced a clarion call for progress, movement and intuition, with short shrift for analysis. Briefly, then, 'short views', or relatively so.

Dr. Ushenko attempts a reconciliation between these extremes by reviving Aristotle's *potentiality-actuality* as *power-event*. Naturally, there are significant differences, as when the author presents a respectable demonstration that power is an observable

entity. Moreover, he adopts the wholly admirable principle of looking for a species of invariant, which might form the desired sheet anchor in transformations from one *Weltanschauung* to another. In this appears the possibility of a metaphilosophic system alongside contemporary work in metalogic and metamathematics. All well and good: what is surprising and encouraging is the setting selected for one of the major manifestations of power. This is none other than art, and the visual arts in particular. Indeed, it may be said that the transition from a typical Italian primitive painting, through the rhythm of the High Renaissance, to the romanticism of the Baroque, demonstrates very accurately corresponding events in the region of pure thought.

Several famous pictures are therefore discussed in terms of vector properties, namely, the capacity of implicit lines to carry over the eye to some essential point of the composition, and thus to generate aesthetic tension. That this is a very real effect was recognized years ago by Birkhoff in his "Aesthetic Measure". It is also amenable to qualitative analysis on a *Gestalt* basis, as I have shown myself in another connexion. A beautiful example given by Ushenko is Leonardo da Vinci's "Last Supper", though what can be learnt from it is perhaps not quite what the present author imagines. He quotes Wölfflin to the effect that the sensation of power is produced by the deliberate use of too short a table, and consequent crowding of the figures. Actually it is more likely that this feeling is caused by the step-wise grouping (not necessarily crowding) of the apostles about an axis passing through the Central Figure, and the 'reflexion' back to the middle suggested by the horizontality of the arms on the extreme right. But above all is Leonardo's choice of the moment of betrayal rather than the conventional one of Communion, as the theme of this sublime fresco. It connotes not peace, but a sword. All this reinforces the general argument in favour of *Sturm und Drang*, or at least a condition of dynamic equilibrium, such as Kekulé once invoked to establish the permanence of his benzene ring.

Thus it is that in the whole section dealing with power the author seems to be at his best. This is his own domain in which he is thoroughly at home. Outside, he discourses upon paradoxes, intuition, probability and so forth. The result here is less striking, and it might be prudent to regard these passages more as valuable comment than as new material. Apparently it is hoped that students will use the book as a text. If they do, they will need some kind of summary at the end of each main chapter (four in all), not as a temptation to skip the rest, but because a novice could not reasonably be expected to have a steady enough hand (and possibly head) to decant the liquor without undue spillage.

The general format is excellent, and the volume is a pleasure to handle. A minor blemish occurs in Fig. 1 (after Köhler). The segmental boundaries are drawn as dotted lines, whereas in the original (English edition) they are solid. The latter is much to be preferred for the fixation test.

To return to where we started. Dr. Ushenko's *Dynamik* is apt to run hot occasionally, and his reactions are a trifle gregarious. No harm whatever, though some of us may conceivably cherish something a little more *intime*, like a certain author of last century who honoured his thoughts by calling them the "companions of my solitude".

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