

**Philosophy and philosophers: An introduction to Western philosophy**, John Shand  
(London: UCL Press, 1993), xi + 348 pp., £19.95.

John Shand's admirable book is not quite as comprehensive as its title suggests. As he tells us in the Introduction, it is only concerned with the 'major philosophers', and only with 'what are generally regarded as the central areas of philosophy: the nature of philosophy itself, the theory of knowledge (epistemology) and the essential nature of reality (metaphysics)'. Thus, aside from the entry on the Pre-Socratics, and the individual paragraphs on post-1945 philosophers, it examines only twenty philosophers. It contains no moral or political philosophy, and no aesthetics. There are no entries on, for example, Socrates, Hobbes, Bentham, Schopenhauer, Mill, Kierkegaard, Marx, James, Frege, or Heidegger. About philosophers such as Kant we are told '[he] published many other works on science, aesthetics, and on ethics' (p. 160).

Within these strict limits, the book does an excellent job of clarifying the metaphysics and epistemology of each of the major philosophers. Shand, who teaches for the Open

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University, is a persistent and rigorous exegete, and always avoids mere summary. There are diagrams to present relations between categories and ontological hierarchies as simply as possible, and all arguments are laid out with the utmost clarity. Thus Berkeley is said to argue that materialism is: '(i) Unjustified . . . (ii) Unnecessary . . . (iii) False and must be false . . . (iv) Meaningless . . . (v) Contradictory . . .', (p. 131), where each of these accusations is separately explained. Every philosopher is also shown to have a more complex set of ideas than is normally assumed in such histories. The entry on Locke, for example, concludes with '[Locke] does not fit the traditional empiricist mould for two important reasons . . .' (p. 128), and the entry on Sartre includes the claim that 'In this sense Sartre expresses a position in *Nausea* that is very close to that of Hume' (p. 252). I found the entries on Ockham and Hegel particularly informative, but each entry has something valuable. The selective bibliographies at the back of the book are also uniformly good and up-to-date, extending to the recent *Cambridge Companion* and *Oxford Dictionary* series.

A remark about Christopher Kirwan's *Augustine* (1989) in the bibliography for Augustine—'some may find inappropriate his dedicated application to Augustine of the methods of modern analytical philosophy' (p. 318)—is curiously revealing of the book's strength. Although Shand is working from within the analytical tradition, this book is determined to be sympathetic to each philosopher, and to avoid being Whiggish or anachronistic. There is little or no patronization, and any criticism is left until afterwards. When Shand does go on the attack, as he does with Kant—'Even if we avoid giving any function to noumenon, it is still said to exist; and this means the category of existence applies to it in flat contradiction of the assertion that no categories can apply to it' (p. 180)—it is always in good faith.

My two reservations about the book concern the final chapter and the matter of quotations. The final chapter is entitled 'Recent Philosophy', but it is only six and a half pages long. Thirteen philosophers are given a single paragraph each. This strikes me as rather perfunctory—if one is going to have a chapter on philosophy after 1945, better to make it a proper one. Secondly, with the exception of the chapter on Nietzsche, and apart from the odd word or famous phrase, there are no quotations from any of the philosophers examined in the book. I think this policy detracts from the value of such a work.