modesty to have improved. See for instance the grotesque expression in his *Common Cause*:

"the rules of the epic would have been better observed if Boston had risen for a Holy Sepulchre to liberate or for a Helen to recuperate, while the uninspiring strife over matters of taxation and levies, too frankly avowed, seemed made to order for the most remorseless materialistic interpretation of history." ((cited p. 86)

Parisi quotes Piovene's opinion that "l'esagerata considerazione che lo scrittore ha del proprio ruolo storico sia un dato medio, una qualità neutra capace di degenerare in vizio o degenerare in virtù." (p. 87). This is a little too kind.

Obviously there is a certain convenience for the student of Borgese to have assembled in one volume five well-informed studies on Borgese. Each one, having been published previously, has its own academic *imprimatur*. However the new setting generates distortions of emphasis and redundancies which there has been no attempt to address. Granted, for example, that the political writing of Borgese is truly horrible, is it reasonable to dedicate nearly as much to it in a volume as to his more meritorious novels? Let us by all means gather posthumously into single volumes substantial articles of the various great departed scholars. The living could make a few allowances for their readers, by adjusting and editing. In its citations *Borgese* employs an impenetrable combination of endnotes plus abbreviations in brackets. Each chapter repeats its own separate abbreviations, encrypted at some time and in some place, in one or several endnotes. Was it necessary to print on each of the pages 40, 58 and 75 that henceforth R would stand for *Rubè*? To have an idea of the effort required to read the book, multiply this by the number of all similar bibliographical items similarly treated. Surely a single list of abbreviations, and indeed a single bibliography, would be the least one could have expected. In short this volume should have been assembled with more regard for the reader.

ANTONIO D. PAGLIARO

La Trobe University
Melbourne, Australia

Paolozzi, Ernesto. *Benedetto Croce. Logica del reale e il dovere della libertà*. Napoli: Libreria Editrice E. Cassitto, 1998. Pp. 91.

Ernesto Paolozzi's *Benedetto Croce* is the best short introduction to the philosophy of the Neapolitan philosopher to date. The work provides a general view of Croce's philosophy and presents an in-depth analysis of some of the key issues Croce tangled with throughout his career: the relation of the aesthetic to the logic; the role and viability of the sciences; the world of *praxis* understood in terms of economy, politics, ethics and vitality; the question of liberalism, and, finally, the notion of history as contemporary history. But the author's most valuable contribution lies in the fact that his reading is not simply a survey or a synthesis of Croce's work but

a critical analysis that undermines many of the standard and traditional readings. Albeit in the form of suggestions and working hypotheses, given the modest objectives of the work, Paolozzi lays the groundwork for future and innovative analyses of Croce's philosophy.

The author reads Croce within the historical background against which his philosophy emerged and developed. He outlines Croce's lifelong struggle against Positivism, against the danger of a mentality that would submit to the scientific method any field of knowledge from literary criticism to history, from philosophy to politics. He points to the early influence on Croce by Antonio Labriola and Marxism, to his relationship with Giovanni Gentile and the founding of the journal *La critica*, to the erudite studies on the history and legends of Naples, as well as to the early studies on history and aesthetics that foreshadow the later philosophical works. Finally, Paolozzi stresses the importance of Hegel's influence and above all, of Giambattista Vico, as well as the theme of liberty developed in the later years, of liberty as a moral principle and as a method of interpreting reality.

In dealing with the *Aesthetics* of 1902, Croce's first major work, Paolozzi discusses the central role that it occupies within the corpus of Croce's philosophy and the importance that he attributed to the aesthetic as "testing ground" for any philosophy and as key to understanding the cultural and ideological premises of his own thought. The most important of these premises are the identity of aesthetics and language, as the title of *Aesthetics as Science of Expression and General Linguistics* indicates, and the Kantian influence on Croce's argumentation that, in Paolozzi's view, has had an even greater influence than Hegel. Croce's *Aesthetics* is yet another instance of Croce's philosophy as a "concrete and operating philosophy of liberty." It frees artistic activity from the strictures and prejudices of tradition in order to fulfil the true task of philosophy which is that of explaining reality, of finding the reasons of what we already intuit and know.

Paolozzi also dismisses the established prejudice of a discrepancy between Croce the theorist and the literary critic. In his view there is "continuous osmosis" between theory and practice as theory sheds light on the criticism and vice versa. Though he is aware that Croce's critical judgment can sometimes reflect his own personal taste and can be excessive at times, as when he praises a very minor poet but damns a major one, in his view, Croce's judgment is always in line with his methodology and critical ideology, as when he combats aestheticism, sensualism and a certain type of romanticism, which go hand in hand with his struggle against rationalism and positivism. Even when Croce's judgment appears misguided and negative, it is often a question of giving Croce a second reading and realize that in some cases he was not very wrong. In other cases, though, one can say only that "Croce the critic forgets Croce the theorist."

In his analysis of Croce's, *The Logic*, Paolozzi insists on the basic Kantian origins of his universal-concrete concept. Croce's system, in his view, is nothing but a continuous chain of synthetic *a priori* concepts, in a general synthesis constitutive of both life and history. In contrast to Hegel's opposition and dialectics, Croce opposes a logic of distincts without, however, negating Hegel's dialectic. The concept of utility, for example, is not in opposition to the concept of good (art) or

truth (philosophy) but is distinct from them. Utility is only opposed to what is not useful, what is harmful, and so on. The concept of distinction does not imply, however, that there is no unity. The contrary is true for concepts are only distinguishable in their unity. Their reality and unity is also their distinction. "Man," says Croce, "is both thought and action."

Paolozzi also provides an account of Croce's other major theme, the relation between thought and action, between philosophical and historical judgment, or, as he puts it in *The Logic*, the identity of philosophy and history. Philosophy, Paolozzi explains, does not imply or incorporate history (in Croce, rather, the opposite is true) but thinks history and is continuously transformed by it, in its constant struggle with the negative.

Paolozzi's most important contribution is in clarifying Croce's attitude toward the sciences and their relation to Croce's historicist philosophy. In his view, the problem does not originate with Croce but with Kant and Hegel who had already taken position against the sciences and had already differentiated scientific from philosophical research. In Croce, instead, the issue is radically different because the sciences do not constitute an inferior form of knowledge, rather a "distinct" knowledge from philosophy. The sciences do not belong to the sphere of the intellect or spirit, but to the sphere of practical reason, and to the sphere of the economic. The sciences, thus, should not be judged in terms of whether they are true or false, but in terms of their utility.

In the remaining chapters, Paolozzi discusses the *Philosophy of the Practical* and the categories of vitality-utility; his concept of liberalism and the historical works that exemplify it, and, finally, *History. Theory and Practice*, the fourth and last of Croce's major works that make up his Philosophy of Spirit, where his concept of history as contemporary history and as ethico-political historiography is discussed, together with his major historical works: the *History of the Kingdom of Naples*, *History of the Baroque in Italy*, *The History of Italy from 1871 to 1915*, and the most famous one, *History of Europe in the XIXth Century*. These last chapters provide a final taste of Croce's more compelling and, to be sure, problematic philosophical deliberations. They are necessarily brief but Paolozzi is nonetheless able to capture in these few pages the essence as well as the legacy of Croce's voluminous philosophical contribution, which, as he points out all along, is of philosophy as the story of liberty.

Although a very short work, this is not only an excellent introduction to Croce's thought but it is also a very useful book to the Croce scholar for present reflection and future investigations. It is to be hoped that the work may soon appear in English.

MASSIMO VERDICCHIO
University of Alberta