

The *Georgics* are a very paradoxical transitional poem from pastoral to epic, and Professor Otis sees them rather as a philosophical meditation on the relation of man and nature, especially animal nature outside and within himself, in a sentient stoic cosmos rather than a didactic poem about agriculture and its revival. Aristaeus and Orpheus, providing a clear moral link between mystical death and regeneration (absent in *Eclogue V*), are integral and not a substitute for the praises of Gallus. In this analysis of movement and structure, which goes deeper than Jacques Perret's, one misses, however, any discussion of Virgil's anxious reflections on his proposed epic. Professor Otis discounts them, as he does *tua dicere facta* in E.IV, 54 and VIII, 8: on the eve of the *Aeneid* Virgil could not, he argues, have still thought of a historical epic in the manner of Ennius. Certainly the ancient *Lives* tell us that the *Aeneid* took eleven years, 29–19 B.C., but Donatus shows that in fact it was not begun until 26 when Augustus was in Spain.

Two long chapters deal with the Odyssean *Aeneid I–VI* and the Iliadic VII–XII. Virgil did not start with Homer, but elaborated his own Augustan, radically un-Homeric scheme into Homeric motifs. Aeneas is a new kind of hero, though he begins in Book II as a traditional one; he ends by standing in contrast to Turnus, the *alter Achilles*. The empathetic style now becomes an art of using episodes (e.g. the storm in Book I) as symbols, of foreshadowing and intensifying motifs by similes, imagery and deliberate recalls and contrasts in a psychological continuum. Hence Professor Otis analyses 'structure' in elaborate tables: he believes in it almost to excess: 'the best clue to its meaning is its structure'. But he does carry further the work of Conway, Perret, Pöschl and others, and notices new interrelations, for instance the recapitulations in VI and XII. As Aeneas meets his past in Palinurus, Dido and Deiphobus, so Turnus repeats the postponement of his duel with Aeneas in a second broken treaty, a second critical absence when his chief ally is killed, a second chance missed before he too faces the final ordeal.

The idea of Aeneas 'fighting with all that was in him and yet preserving an essential humanity' is 'certainly far from Christian', 'but it is a new note in epic'. Nor is the end of the *Aeneid* Christian, but it combines *humanitas* with a realistic moral sense unsentimentally, and is 'civilized', and less Augustan propaganda, than the hope of what an ideal Roman might be.

A fresh and interesting book, though long and not easy.

COLIN HARDIE

HIDDEN RICHES, by Désirée Hirst; Eyre and Spottiswoode; 42s.

One of the difficulties in reviewing this book arises from the fact that its form is elliptical. One focus point is occupied by William Blake, the other by a crowd of oddly assorted thinkers who have in common one of the most disuniting of all creeds, the belief in one's inner light. To say this is to over-simplify, and, in some cases at least, to be unjust, but it makes a point not easy to be made otherwise,

namely, that Blake must be thought of in relation to these others, and it brings out the fact that the book suffers in lucidity from being organised round two centres of interest rather than one. It is not quite a 'history of traditional symbolism', nor quite a study of Blake, but something that tends to shift in shape from one to the other. Nevertheless, the author makes good her case that Blake's thought, however much he may have recognised in himself an individual inspiration, derives from a contemporary movement well rooted in tradition. Moreover, in establishing the existence of this contemporary movement Miss Hirst has earned the gratitude of those whose interest in the eighteenth century is not confined to Blake.

Nothing is more attractive to human nature than the idea of possessing a secret knowledge, or, at least, one shared only by a few elect, yet adorned by all the glamour of an ancient wisdom. In times of a dominant materialism the temptation is especially potent, since it appeals to the good through what is best in itself, its faith in spiritual reality. This is one reason for the recrudescence in the earlier twentieth century of just such an occultistic movement as that of the eighteenth, a movement which drew in various notable personalities if only for a time, and which had its Blake in Yeats.

Eastern and western thinkers do not approach truth from the same direction. The eastern thinker is largely uninfluenced by the rational attitude which controls the west. He can retain without mental discomfort beliefs which are inconsistent with each other, and he may be so strongly aware of the necessity of symbolic language to express experience which transcends words that he may end by apparently accepting symbols as facts, and reducing what began by being ultra-spiritual to having a common denominator with matter. It may be possible for an eastern type thinker to retain his mental integrity in this situation, rather as one of the blind men who were asked to define an elephant might acknowledge the thick firm leg and the thin, flexible tail as non-contradictory, if he had touched them both. But the western thinker cannot without loss accept a mode of thinking which proceeds from the non-logical to the non-rational; he cannot admit both the leg and the tail unless in relation to an elephantine whole. Hence, as Miss Hirst, who has seen the whole elephant, points out, a mode of thinking and expression which was illuminating and fruitful while it remained in contact with the totality of Christian spiritual experience was doomed to become progressively less balanced, less coherent, less comprehensive, and less valid, when it had lost that contact.

No doubt he who seeks sincerely will find something, if not everything. Spiritual experience escapes the limitations of our formulae, and is not restricted to those who have learned the definitions. But where a William Law may be led back to the sanity of a Teresa of Avila, there are many others who will be bogged down in a certain mental and moral provincialism which disables them from distinguishing false mysticism from true. Blake himself, while possessing virtue and intellect and cultivating both as far as was in his power without other guidance than any that he could obtain, or would have accepted, did not escape the fallacy

of making his own experience the criterion of truth. Miss Hirst, with all her admiration of Blake, recognises this, and it is one of the merits of her book that she does so.

All students of Blake will have to take account of the facts gathered in this work; it also supplies many useful, curious and interesting footnotes to other writers, though not everyone will accept the validity of these in every case. The mass of information about the neo-Platonic and gnostic tradition in later times and its connection with the legendary wisdom of the east, its defence also of Renaissance scholars accused of paganising, would be even more valuable than it is if the whole book did not lack something of coherence, and if the style were not marked by certain peculiarities which subtract from its lucidity. This book, nevertheless, is a valuable guide in a field where one should not be ignorant but where knowledge is difficult to obtain unless like Miss Hirst, one be possessed of unusual zeal, ability and diligence.

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THE MYTHS OF LOVE, by Denis de Rougemont, translated by Richard Howard; Faber and Faber; 25s.

No other emotion can be as revealing of a man's personality as his capacity for love. The inner self is both constituted and manifested through spontaneous emotional responses of tenderness and affection. On a wider scale, the established attitude to love is symptomatic of the state of health that characterises a particular creed or culture. But to reach a balanced judgment on these issues, it is necessary to estimate the dimensions and varieties of the emotion in question. Contrary to the traditional dichotomy between concupiscence and friendship, between egoism and altruism, man must first find his own ego before he can discover and cherish the self of another. In the words of Nietzsche: 'We must beware the man who hates himself, for we are sure to be victims of his anger and his vengeance. Let us therefore try to persuade him to love himself'. Love thy neighbour *as thy-self*. Of the many varieties of amorous behaviour distinguished by the Greeks, Eros (love-as-passion), so much suspected by the Christian Fathers, has been reinstated by Freud. More than any other type erotic love has fashioned the mores and literature of the world. It is a fundamental structure of the human psyche.

To love and not to desire, to desire and not to love. The need to dissociate love from pleasure is indicative of that inner tension that tortures the human condition. It may express itself in one or other of two extreme attitudes. One seeks to transcend duration, to regard our present incarnation as a state of suffering and illusion and pursues ecstatic peace in a drama of increasing intensity. This attitude is typified in the eroticism of Tristan—the Tristan of myth and music, the archetype of love without pleasure. The other attitude despises duration; an insatiable thirst for novel excitation, its desires are those