

EXISTENTIALIST THOUGHT. By Ronald Grimsley. (University of Wales Press; 15s.)

SUBJECT AND OBJECT IN MODERN THEOLOGY. By James Brown. (S.C.M. Press; 18s.)

With the publication—dismayingly frequent—of each new book on existentialism, the forlorn hope that 'this may be the last' momentarily reasserts itself. Dr Grimsley has added yet another to the series. Once more the usual succession from Kierkegaard to Gabriel Marcel is marshalled and displayed before us—and, we hope, for the last time. With the hope that this may be the last book to be published about existentialist thought, for once goes the conviction that it deserves to be. In place of the idiosyncratic enthusiasms or offended philosophical propriety which so often find expression in books like this, what we are given here is a straightforward and sober exposition of the principal themes to be found in the work of the foremost existentialist thinkers. The account is clear, balanced, and as complete as can be expected within the covers of a 200-page book.

In his Croall Lectures on *Subject and Object in Modern Theology* the Rev. James Brown attempts a task similar to that brilliantly carried through by Dr John Macquarrie in his book on Bultmann's theology.* He seeks to elucidate the work of a number of modern theologians by tracing to its sources, and analysing the meaning of a set of philosophical concepts employed by them. The concepts he is interested in are those of 'subject' and 'object'. Rightly, he concludes that behind the identical terminology of Kant, Kierkegaard, Heidegger and Barth, among others, and the related language of Martin Buber, there is a whole multiplicity of meanings. This variety, on the one hand, gives catch-phrases like 'God is the Subject who is never object' whatever plausibility they possess, and, on the other hand, tends to undermine serious discussion of such slogans. Unfortunately, the author hardly goes beyond this. The result is that the book, far from giving new insight into the work of the theologians discussed, gives little more than an anthology—albeit a critical anthology—of themes illustrating an existentialist thread in their thought. The thread is scarcely enough to help us pick our way through the problems raised—the problems of what can and cannot be known and said about God, and of how it can (and cannot) be known and said.

R. A. MARKUS

THE REVOLUTION IN PHILOSOPHY. (Macmillan; 10s. 6d.)

This book comprises a series of talks given on the Third Programme, and is an excellent introduction to contemporary English

* *An Existentialist Theology*. (S.C.M. Press, 1955). Reviewed in BLACKFRIARS, January 1956.