

like the expert rider he is, he mounts many very high horses and delights us with his skill: for example, on Romantic Poetry on pages 26-28, though I do not altogether agree; the brave and right claim for English poetry and painting in the note on pages 23-24: how exhilarating to see justice done, even if it must slightly deflate Baudelaire; last, Mr Campbell's gallop on the subject of 'print-happy' literacy (pp. 10-12). For sheer audacity, I recommend Mr Campbell's subtle defence of 'Reactionary Spain' (pp. 11-12). It is good to lose sight of the shadow side of that entity for a moment, though unwise to do so for more than a moment. This study is the most delightful seventy-seven pages of literary criticism it has ever been my good fortune to have to read.

EDWARD SARMIENTO

THE POETRY OF T. S. ELIOT. By D. E. S. Maxwell. (Routledge and Kegan Paul; 21s.)

Mr Maxwell's aim in this book is to reveal continuity and consistency throughout Mr Eliot's poetry. For him Mr Eliot is the defender of orthodoxy in art, a poet consciously accepting tradition and revitalising it. The religious evolution to which the later poems bear witness is shown to follow logically from the aesthetic attitude, the notion of poetry as the perception of order. The recognition of authority and tradition in literature has widened and deepened into a general acceptance of them. There is involved the realisation that poetry can derive its full power only against the background of a coherent and widely held system of belief, the lesson to be especially learned from the example of Dante. Such, in outline, would seem to be Mr Maxwell's thesis. He does not comment fully on any of the poems, assuming in the reader a knowledge of previous commentators; he is concerned to establish the points significant to his theme, discussing mainly Mr Eliot's relation to tradition, his use of allusion, the nature of his symbolism and his use of myth. His book will no doubt take its place among the serious studies of Mr Eliot's poetry, though it can hardly be classed among the most lively. It in no way supplants the work of Professor Matthiessen and Miss Gardner.

To many readers Mr Maxwell's approach to poetry will seem excessively intellectual, his manner arid, for his method seems to preclude imaginative intuition. In his analysis the impression is given, no doubt unintentionally, that Mr Eliot's poetry derives from his theory. Mr Maxwell is so anxious to stress the rôle of the intellect in poetic creation that he perhaps takes too rigid a view of the relationship of the intellect to poetic activity, where there obviously enter imponderables that defy analysis. He is at times too dogmatic, not to say pontifical. Among the formative influences it seems to me that Mr Maxwell does not give adequate prominence to the French poets whose presence is easily discern-

ible in Mr Eliot's earlier work. Indeed, the French background is altogether too lightly sketched. There is little indication of what was attempted and achieved in France in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Rimbaud, for instance, is not even mentioned. Such omissions would be pardonable, were there not the design to relate Mr Eliot's work to 'tradition', to 'the mind of Europe', and to assess his technical achievement.

In considering the poems of religious preoccupation Mr Maxwell rightly insists on the Puritanical element. Rather than a *religious* poet, of course, Mr Eliot is a metaphysical poet. From the religious angle, he appears as a somewhat tenuous voice, probing the problems of the individual soul, questioning and full of disquiet. There is none of the vigorous affirmation of Paul Claudel, for instance, whose genial faith is world-embracing and who emphasises not 'the empty desolation', but joy which is '*une réalité poignante et . . . tout le reste n'est rien auprès*'. This is by no means to decry Mr Eliot's poetry but to help place him in perspective as a poet of religious orientation and to relate him somewhat to one aspect of that 'mind of Europe' of which so much is made, in vague terms, in Mr Maxwell's first chapter.

ERNEST BEAUMONT

THE TRAVELS OF IBN JUBAYR, translated by R. J. C. Broadhurst. (Cape; 42s.)

In all the quasi-mathematical range of what is termed 'Arabic Literature' it is perhaps the travel-narrative that comes nearest to fulfilling our instinctive need for a criticism of life. From it, almost alone, we may often derive a direct reflection of the medieval Muslim's unguarded view of the world and his place in it. Instead, for example, of the innumerable rehashes of abstract (and usually ill-informed) anti-Christian polemic, we may learn what an individual Muslim thought of an actual Christian he met, often in dramatic circumstances: it might be the master of a ship, or simply the pedlar who swindled him over a loaf of bread the important fact is the occasional exhalation of that breath of 'actuality' which seems to belong as of nature only in Christendom. (In Christian culture alone is time so touched by eternity as to yield a secular art and literature which are often sublime.) Of no Arabic travel-narrative is this remark truer than of that by Ibn Jubayr, a Spanish Muslim visiting the Middle East in the time of Saladin. His keen eye and his remarkably personal style make this a work of unique value and attraction to all who are concerned with the abiding reproach of Islam: to see ourselves as others see us and to see them as they see themselves. This is a great part of the exercise of charity.

That I have noticed a number of errors and careless slips in this