

Mgr Tracy Ellis, not only in illuminating the course of the past but in indicating what must be the challenge of the future, is indispensable to the development of an adult and informed Catholic conscience among Americans. That is the importance of his book and of his long years of labour. He complements the generalities—perceptive and important as they are—of Niebuhr and Heimert with the reminder that, if Catholics are to take their proper place in the life of the community at large, they must begin with some understanding of their own history and of its legacy—and of the hope it essentially holds.

ILLTUD EVANS, O.P.

VIRGIL, a Study in Civilized Poetry, by Brooks Otis; O.U.P.; 45s.

Professor Otis of Stanford University, California, addresses himself in this book to one central problem: how could Virgil, who grew to maturity in the circle of 'the new poets' and adhered to Callimachus in the rejection of Apollonius' would-be Homeric epic, later himself conceive the 'preposterous ambition' of breathing life into an art-form, obsolete for seven hundred years, and of being at once 'heroic and civilized, both remote and contemporary, both Homeric and Augustan'? Professor Otis finds a new answer to this paradox because he sees the whole of Virgil's work, from *Eclogues* to *Aeneid*, as the development of a single Augustan ideology or symbol-complex, and Virgil's great achievement as the perfection of a new dramatic 'empathetic' style. This 'subjective style' (doubly so because Virgil not only narrates from the point of view of his characters and their emotions, but 'editorially' comments on them—or inextricably blends the two) already existed to some extent in Ennius, Lucretius and Catullus more than in any Greek, but Virgil even in his earliest *Eclogue*, II Corydon, exhibits it in a far more fully developed form. This style governs every detail of his verse, the choice of tenses and of emotive words, syntax, metre and sound effects. In a series of brilliant detailed analyses of texts Professor Otis anatomizes Virgil's novel art, in *Eclogue*, VIII, in *Georgics* IV (Aristaeus and Orpheus), in a comparison of Virgil's games with Homer's, and of Virgil's Dido with Appolius' Medea. This may seem familiar since Heinze's time (1915), but Professor Otis enriches and deepens previous analyses.

Already in the *Eclogues*, at least when taken as a whole in their carefully planned sequence and pattern, he finds Virgil's central idea of the 'divine man' on whom the world depends, attached to Julius Caesar in *Eclogue* V Daphnis, and to Octavian in *Eclogue* I. Not only the first but the second of these attachments seems to me doubtful; the *Eclogues* are all under Pollio's patronage, and Pollio was an adherent of Antony, and certainly *not* a member of Maecenas' circle. Professor Otis' chronology (especially p. 135) is very questionable, and he makes Virgil's development difficult to conceive by accepting uncritically the statement in the ancient *Lives* that Virgil contemplated a Roman historical epic before he began the *Eclogues*. I prefer to see in *Eclogue* IV the dawn of Virgil's idea of himself as an epic poet.

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,