

extent with Swedenborgianism in the eighteenth century.

Finally, though one can see the force of the passage where Edwin Muir's use of the heraldic is praised, as representing 'some mastery of the natural and animal flux and chaos that is around and within man', would there not be grounds for seeing the recent remarkable experiment with the lioness, Elsa, in East Africa as an altogether higher assertion of this mastery, because one based on love and a reverent understanding of natural forces?

Yet the reader will take away many insights and much inspiration from this volume. Kathleen Raine's affirmation that Vernon Watkins is a Christian poet who has at the same

time absorbed 'the essence of the pagan cosmic sense', within his later poetry, into which, 'filled with blossom and bough, with sea-foam and rock and wings his earlier poetry has been distilled', helps to explain why it was received with such unbounded enthusiasm in America. And surely no undergraduate can dismiss Shelley's work as unworthy of attention after reading her defence of it? Facile underestimation of myth and symbol will likewise be discouraged by the essays on these subjects. The Imagination, which primarily deals in those forms, remains the characteristically human quality; the hallmark of this extraordinary animal, Man, who is only a little lower than the angels.

DESIREE HIRST.

POPE JOHN, by Meriol Trevor. *Macmillan*. 42s.

THE TEACHINGS OF POPE JOHN XXIII, by Meriol Trevor, edited by Michael Chinigo. *Harrap*. 35s.

In a notice of Miss Trevor's life of Philip Neri in this *Journal* (Vol. 48, p. 276) I suggested that a man demands of such a biography three things: new facts, an ordered and comprehensive view of the subject, and a distinctly modern understanding of hagiography. This time I think Miss Trevor has made a go of it. This life of Angelo Roncalli—and she has produced an account of the man's long career not unbalanced by too great a concentration on his years as John XXIII—is a good piece of craftsmanship, a job well done.

The biography is almost strictly chronological and moves sensibly from the Bergamo beginnings through support for the *Partito Popolare*, a lectureship (one term only) at the Lateran, long years in Bulgaria making efforts to encourage the Catholics and learning to talk easily with the Armenians and Orthodox in the days of conservative *Mortalium Animos*, and weathering the unfortunate affair of King Boris and *Casti Connubii*, further years at Istanbul, where he wore lay clothes and introduced vernacular prayers in the cathedral (on 6 May, 1936, he noted in his diary: 'When the Tanre Mubarek olsun, Blessed be God, was recited many people left the church displeased. . . I am happy'), to France, where the assignment was so difficult that none of the Vatican careerists would risk taking the job ('ubi deficiunt equi, trottant aselli'), and where he got into trouble from Pius XII for trotting about Paris, and so to Venice. If it be objected that not much of this information is new, it can certainly be replied that it is new to many readers: the story of the secret anti-modernist

conspiracy which flourished in Merry del Val's Secretariat appeared, some time after Miss Trevor had printed it, in several American newspapers and in the *Catholic Herald*, as a fresh discovery by their probing reporters.

Miss Trevor has employed her anecdotes to reveal character in a carefully directed manner. For example, by noting that in Venice Patriarch Sarto had forbidden priests to visit the Biennale, while Patriarch Roncalli held a reception for the distinguished visitors, Miss Trevor quietly demonstrates the difference of bishop and bishop. And this not just to cheapen personalities but to point a considered view of the Church in which Pope John worked. Miss Trevor has a view of modern Church history which, while sympathetic to the subjective aims of some popes, is able to account for their objective errors. She brings out the importance of Benedict XV, putting him into perspective as the man who in a short pontificate put his energies to matters of international peace, democratic socialism, missionary enterprise, Christian unity and openness within the Church with that sense of history and gospel which characterized John XXIII. For others there is some hard hitting. Pius X comes in for a fair share of blame for the Modernist muddle—a muddle so great that in 1958 the Vatican files were opened in order that on the Roncalli card the damning phrase 'suspected of Modernism' could be slashed through by the bravura 'I, John XXIII, pope, say that I was never a Modernist'. Never a Modernist but always a Christian. In the reign of Pius X, amid the ubiquitous atmosphere of suspicion

and heresy-hunting and oaths of allegiance Roncalli wrote and published this comment on violence of the anti-Modernist polemic: 'if the truth and the whole truth had to be told I do not see why it had to be accompanied by the thunders and lightnings of Sinai rather than by the calm and serenity of Jesus on the lake and on the mount'. Quite dangerous opinions for a young seminary professor and the secretary of the out-of-favour Radini Tedeschi, patron of social commitment and an early form of Christian democracy. The whole tone of Miss Trevor's description of Pius XII is very carefully managed by asides and small telling jokes. That Pope's interest in things modern is suggested by references to 'his keep-fit exercises, experiments with hormone injections and his electric razor (white)', and his aristocratic almost angelic manner conjured by the tale of Vatican officials falling 'on their knees when Pope Pius rang them up on the internal telephone system'. He walked in white satin slippers; John wore stout black leather shoes.

Miss Trevor has demonstrated Roncalli's motives at work throughout his life. She shows us the constant attitudes within which the 'inspirations' were framed. She can actually account for his emergence as the Pope who in a cheerful and cheering way got things moving, and who, if he had lived, might have got things done. She shows him as a man who all his life longed to be useful and found himself merely used. Bulgaria, Istanbul, Paris, even the election to the Papacy, happened, he knew, because other men made their own plans and found him usable. He was always loyal but he never ceased to be astonished that men could be so callous. In 1929 he wrote in his *Journal* that the 'many trials' of his ministry 'are caused not

by the Bulgarians for whom I work but by the central organization of the ecclesiastical administration'. He had expected help and encouragement from Rome while he worked in the difficult diplomatic posts to which he was assigned; instead he was ignored or reprimanded, and always distrusted. In 1936 he wrote in Istanbul: 'the difference between my way of seeing situations on the spot and certain ways of judging things in Rome hurts me considerably; it is my only real cross.' He was the more surprised, therefore, when his orders as Pope were ignored by men whom he had obeyed as servants of the Pope. Combined with this Christian loyalty was his Christian realism. This made him the friend of Greek Patriarch and Anglican curate, of French premier and Russian ambassador, and made him capable of making judgements in a more hard-headed manner than some other curialist diplomats: 'My illustrious predecessor was certainly very acute, but perhaps just a little optimistic; certainly the encounter with the reality of things is sometimes another thing.' He knew that he had to work in the present: 'Each of us has his own cross to bear and each cross takes its own particular form; mine is fashioned in the style of this century.'

Miss Trevor's account makes it plain at last that Pope John's reputation rests not on the cleverness of a public relations officer, nor on the acts of an old man delighting to shock his peers and be 'in' with the young, but on a hard-working life in the discovery and service of the Lord.

Mr Chinigo has made a collection of the Pope's speeches which in its total dullness shows just how well Miss Trevor has handled the available printed sources. HAMISH SWANSTON

**NEWMAN AND THE MODERN WORLD**, by Christopher Hollis, *Hollis & Carter, London, 1967, 30s.*  
**GOD AND MYSELF**, by Hilda Graef, *Peter Davies, London, 1967, 42s.*

Christopher Hollis has studied Newman's life and teaching in its historical context and attempted to show their relevance at the present time. His central theme is that Newman's ideas, which were often rejected during his lifetime, are now finding their full justification and he claims that Newman was the great forerunner of the Second Vatican Council. Such a thesis is hardly new, nor are the philosophical or theological instances used in support of it, such as Newman's arguments in favour of God's existence or his attitude towards the role of the laity. But the author is

so well informed, historically and politically, that it is particularly interesting to read his account and evaluation of Newman's approach to the growth of democracy and the development of the neutral or secular state.

The author shows a realistic assessment of some of the institutional problems of recent years, he vividly describes the increasing isolation of Roman Catholicism during the nineteenth century, and he appreciates the significance of Newman's opposition to the negative, obstructive, 'Novation', official ecclesiastical policy of a *non possumus*. It is