

many of these not only reflect his interests but his personality—his taste for what is striking, massive and dominating. Here surely was a chance for an interesting piece of psychological interpretation however brief; unfortunately it is missing.

The volume closes with an article by Patrick McCarthy on Claudel's contacts with England through the work of Patmore and Alice Meynell and a 'meditation' by Alexander Mavrocordato on Claudel's English prose poem *The Lady who always did the Right thing*. Mr McCarthy's remarks particularly on the theme of the Catholic revival in both France and England in the early years of the century indicate the involved nature of this topic and the influential position that Claudel enjoyed. The study of the prose poem, however, appears to be little more than an enthusiastic, even excessive, defence of the poet's manipulation of a foreign language—'his English reads superbly' (p. 196). Fortunately the text is reproduced for us in its entirety and we can judge for ourselves, but if T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound were 'rash enough to publish' (p. 194) in French, the claims made here for Claudel's abilities in

English seem to me at least to be somewhat overstated.

As I suggested earlier the unevenness in the topics selected for discussion and their treatment is echoed in the style; Edward Lucie-Smith is as polished and elegant as ever, Michael Wood alert and refreshingly free from academic jargon, Ernest Beaumont at times sober and always scholarly. But because of such unevenness it is legitimate to inquire at what kind of audience this volume is directed. As it is, it tends to be neither wholly academic nor wholly popular in appeal. Above all most of the articles demand at least some prior acquaintance with Claudel's work, especially if those studies which suggest further similar investigations are to be valued properly. But if one of the aims of this book is to stimulate interest in Claudel a biographical outline and at least some indications of further critical reading in French or English would have added to its value. Apart from this, though, the volume is a carefully and attractively produced addition to present Claudel criticism.

J. E. FLOWER

**THE CULT OF SINCERITY**, by Herbert Read. *Faber and Faber*, 1968. 184 pp. 42s.

The dominant feeling that comes to me from this posthumous group of eleven essays is a renewed admiration that one who had so much to do with the world of authors and publishers and critics should still have been able to keep himself unspotted from the characteristic vices of that world. We see every week the same sour spectacle of writers denouncing their nearest counterparts, lashing their juniors, deriding their elders, greedily biting the hands that fed them. In these essays we have instead a consistent pattern of good sense and good manners in the candid acknowledgment of debts, in the continued sympathy towards friends who in this way or that have parted company from oneself, in a general courtesy which is quite compatible with acute criticism of particulars.

Most readers are likely to be attracted first by the second part of the book, which directly discusses individuals—T. S. Eliot, Jung, Bertrand Russell, Richard Aldington, D. H. Lawrence and Edwin Muir. It is disappointing that an essay on Eric Gill, announced on the dust-jacket, is not after all included in this collection.

The first part concerned with more general topics of philosophy and psychology, politics

and the theory of art, may at first glance appear less rewarding because some of the matters treated of—e.g. the distinction of truthfulness and sincerity—are not accorded the scrupulous care in definition which might possibly settle the business once for all or else give a solid base for future controversy. (I wish that someone more philosophically competent than myself would expand or confute the dictum of a very unfashionable critic, Ugo Ojetti: 'Sincerity in art is not a starting-point; it is an arrival-point'.) Nevertheless, I think that it is in some passages of this first half of the book that the reader may most clearly see what were the truths and values that Herbert Read clung to most firmly in his judgments about himself and about the world. I quote accordingly.

'Democracy, just as a political concept, is meaningless for any society larger than a small city or a rural commune. Our so-called democracies in the Western World are oligarchies subject more or less to periodical revision (which never changes their oligarchical structure), and in this they do not differ essentially from the oligarchies that rule the communist world. The people, in any human corporate sense, do not determine any policies outside their backyards. The world is governed by the

representatives of industry, finance, technology, and by bureaucracies in the paid service of these powerful groups—governed, not in the interests of the people as a whole, not even of all the people in any one country, and not even nowadays for personal profit, but primarily for the self-satisfying exercise of power.’

‘I despair when I think of John Ruskin, for he was a man endowed with sense and sensibility, energy and leisure, who throughout a long life-time fought with eloquence and passionate clarity for the values I have fought for, and in the end was utterly defeated. . . . The evils and wrongs he denounced have continued to flourish since he died more than sixty years ago, a sad and demented old man. Does it therefore serve any purpose, I have often said to myself (and others have said to me), to fight the same battle with my inferior weapons and without Ruskin’s security and leisure? . . . I know it is absurd to oppose the overwhelming forces of technology, usury, philistinism, all aspects of the rationalism that pervades every aspect of modern civilization. But though this is the common-sense and condemnatory view

of my life, I know that it could not have been otherwise, and that the battle which Ruskin engaged must be continually renewed—or we retreat into despair, silence, or some “Dirt-dump” like *Finnegans Wake*.’

‘I seem to avoid the final issue—perhaps have done so all my life. Buber believed in a personal relationship with “the spirit of God” . . . Jung was more ambiguous, but when asked whether he believed in God, answered, “I do not believe: I know.” . . . I cannot bear witness to the presence of God either in Buber’s sense or in Jung’s sense, and yet I am not a materialist. All my life I have found more sustenance in the work of those who bear witness to the reality of a living God than in the work of those who deny God—at least, the witness of the deniers, Stirner, Marx, Nietzsche, Freud, Shaw, Russell has been out-balanced by the witness of those who affirm God’s existence—George Herbert, Pascal, Traherne, Spinoza, Kierkegaard, Hopkins, Simone Weil. In that state of suspense, “waiting on God”, I still live and shall probably die.’

WALTER SHEWRING

**DROP OUT**, by Robin Farquharson. *Anthony Blond*, 1968. 104 pp. 25s.

In a way, it is already rather anachronistic to be reviewing this book, which was perhaps out of date even when it appeared (it was written in the winter of 1967-8), and is certainly so now. The author (previously an Oxbridge don, subsequently in a mental hospital, now happily managing a telephone for an ‘underground’ information and welfare service in London) and the whole drop-out scene have moved on considerably. And in any case, as Dr Farquharson (Robin) points out, his experience is not wholly typical, due to his age, on the one hand, which made him rather a ‘dirty old tramp’ than a hippy, and to his literary potentiality (few drop-outs have a D.Phil. and a research fellowship behind them), which earned him £2 a week from his publisher, thus saving him from the dole as well as from total dependence on Providence. (Yes, one can live on £2 a week income.)

Nevertheless, the book does suggest several topics of enduring relevance, not to say embarrassment, to Christians. ‘In the world you meet with persecution’ (John 16, 33), ‘and the apostles rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonour for the Name’ (Acts 5, 41). Is it not a little like that, when Robin, after being beaten up by some children, goes into a nearby church to give

thanks? At last he is experientially identified with the victims of prejudice and hatred!

Of course, Christians are persecuted ‘for the Name’. But what is this name and what does it entail? Surely at least Love and Truth, too radical to compromise, too total and alien ever to be assimilable by ‘the world’. An opposition or protest movement can generally be assimilated and tamed into an establishment slot (witness the quite extraordinary outcome of 27th October last year), and little—not nothing, to be sure—is achieved. The only ultimate, finally unassimilable, challenge is one that takes its stand on principles utterly its own, that does not operate within ‘the world’s’ terms of reference. It is not an opposition movement, because it does not set out to oppose anything; it is totally positive, it believes only in Yes (cf. II Cor. 1.19). And that is the essence of dropping-out, that was the real strength of the hippies in their prime. And that, it seems to me, is the authentic model of Christian dissent. One *cannot* serve two masters. That is a statement of fact, not of ethics. Real protest, and real influence, are both secondary epiphenomena—witness the immense influence of the drop-outs of the Egyptian desert.

As the *I Ching* says, ‘A crane calling in the shade. Its young answers it.’ ‘The root of all