

typical example: 'Any conceptions elaborated beyond those specified, presuppose in political society conditions gratuitously dispensed in the likeness of man.'

Beginning with the Thomist conception of human nature, Pradera investigates the essential characteristics of political society as it should be if it is to accord as well as possible with the basic and inescapable requirements of man. The Good State, which he lays down as the pattern of the New State, is found, when the details have been filled in, to be the Old State of the Reyes Católicos, Ferdinand and Isabella. These details have been incorporated into the *a priori* scheme by the introduction of what we may call the traditionalist premiss, viz. 'Without tradition there is no nation.' We may agree that 'the true and legitimate national structure' built up of King, Church, fundamental law, Cortes, autarchies of sub-sovereign societies, Council, and Court of Justice, presents a 'picture of insuperable perfection, in which order prevails as each institution figures in its appointed place,' so long as it is realised that in their individuality these details are justified precisely by tradition. Conformably to other traditions these functions, specifically valid, can and should be realised with a world of difference.

Some small points may be noted in conclusion. One cannot admit, and from the previous paragraph (p. 65) one would not suppose the author to admit that 'if the Beatific Vision, man's final destiny, is of a supernatural order, reason previously indicates it as a destiny natural to an infinite being.' It is debatable whether the religious and civil societies, in a purely natural state of man, must be governed by distinct authorities, as it is asserted they ought to be. A reference to the *Summa* will show the exaggeration of saying that St. Thomas 'disapproves two forms of solitude' in II-II, 188, 8.

IVO THOMAS, O.P.

DRAMA, TRAVEL AND FICTION

THE FAMILY REUNION. A Play by T. S. Eliot. (Faber and Faber; 7s. 6d.)

Both the play and the book in which it is made accessible to the stay-at-home public have been described in some detail elsewhere in the Catholic Press (notably in *The Catholic Herald* and *The Tablet*), so that the reviewer may be forgiven if he limits the scope of his review to a footnote on the poet's symbolism and a few reflections after the event.

The process of the play is analytical rather than dramatic,

and it belongs to a period of literary history which has Freud very much in its background. The young man, Harry, pursued by the Eumenides (for the very good reason that he has pushed his socially impossible wife into the sea) finds the solution of his tangled destiny and of his own remorseful horror of life in the unveiling of the grim secret—it is indeed the *inevitable* secret—of the adulterous passion of Agatha and his dead father. Agatha, spiritually the most obviously exalted character, is thus herself the knot in which the tangled threads of the play are tied.

Agatha, partner of an adulterous passion which was not and could not be consummated in this world, is the spiritual mother of Harry, whose crime of wife-murder was committed in the name of this passion borne vicariously and seeking an object. So the necessary dramatic implications of the play lead back to the knot tied long before its action began: the identification of Agatha with the Eumenides at its climatic point is the identification of her adulterous love with his guilt. From that moment Harry is not afraid to see the Eumenides.

At first sight a rather banal Freudian conclusion. Such passages as :

‘ I am the old house
With the noxious smell and the sorrow before morning,
In which all past is present, all degradation
Is unredeemable,’

have not the Christian sense of the profundity of evil. The author appears to have sidestepped that depth. There is frequent reference to an esoteric *experience* of evil in the sight of the Eumenides themselves; an experience which

‘ If you believed it still you would not understand,’

but that is another matter.

To go back: the social (and matrimonial) order sustained by stupid will, possession, the comfort of the daytime and the fear of the dark, is symbolized in Harry's mother. She could not possess the father and she cannot possess the son. Neither could the young neurotic wife possess him, for she is for him only the shrill and incomplete symbol of the mother. In pushing her overboard he renounces all that the mother stands for. He enters the confines of darkness, of the ‘nether world,’ pursued by the Eumenides. At the moment when his past and therefore, in some sense, his destiny is revealed to him, Agatha stands in the window embrasure taking the place of the Eumenides. Her revelation to him is also his *initiation*. The word

is inescapable from the whole context of the last part of the play, but initiation into what? Firstly into the number of those set free by recognition, through suffering, of the necessity of evil. Secondly, into a life of ascetic discipline in expiation of necessary evil. Thirdly into the spiritual exaltation of a passion which, for this life, has renounced its object. Harry's symbolic act is to go out into the darkness. Agatha and Mary, priestess and initiate of the passion which has triumphed, perform a rite of exorcism,

' So the knot be unknotted
The crossed be uncrossed
The crooked be made straight
And the curse be ended,'

which ends, after the blowing out of the last candle, in darkness. So to trace back romantic passion, Denis de Rougemont has shown (in his recent book, *L'Amour et l'Occident*), is to reduce it to Manichean, not Christian, origins.

BERNARD KELLY, T.O.S.D.

THE LAWLESS ROADS. By Graham Greene. (Longmans; 10s. 6d.)

It is the unique distinction of *Lawless Roads* that it could be reviewed either as a travel book on Mexico or as a treatise *De Ecclesia*. As an account of Mexico in the spring of 1938 it will remain integrally alive. Mr. Greene has travelled from Laredo as far south as Palenque and conveys poignantly an atmosphere of fly-blown squalor. There are vignettes more difficult to forget than any in his book upon Liberia; the begging upon Hui-chapan station, the small zoo, the booth at San Antonia. But, like most contemporary phenomena, Mexican politicians might grow more intelligible if set against their nineteenth century background and the historical as well as the psychological causes of Latin-American anti-clericalism might seem to demand a more detailed recognition. It is possible to feel that Mr. Greene has an insufficient sympathy for the mentality of a Garrida Cannibal. His white is always convincingly piebald, his black at times too black.

But as a study of Catholicism it is complete. The Church in *Lawless Roads* is a living Church, the fulfilment of the purpose of the Incarnation, a linking of the human and of the Divine. In it the human stays completely human. But the smug pettiness of so much human action ceases to be only smug or merely petty through the contrast of an eternal standard. At