

suspect that being taken seriously is itself being taken too seriously! Also the venerable tradition of our unnecessaryness to God would seem to be a very valuable one. There is a special joy in knowing that one is needed, and this Vanstone elucidates admirably; but there is also a special joy in the sheer gratuitousness of things, ourselves included—caught especially well by Charles Williams in his Arthurian poems—and this Vanstone rather tends to disallow. Nor can one simply write off the approach

to God by the *via eminentiac*; that too corresponds to a fundamental human instinct. It is, I suppose, the constant temptation of positive theology to take one model too exclusively, and Vanstone has scarcely even tried to resist it. What he says positively is often extremely rewarding, but he denies more than he needs to, and omits more than he ought to.

SIMON TUGWELL, O.P.

**THE RENAISSANCE OF WONDER** by Marion Lochhead. *Canongate* 1977  
pp. viii + 169 £4.00

This is a friendly, chatty book, whose purpose is to trace the re-awakening of the sense of wonder evident in children's books during the past hundred or so years. This is equated, without further ado, with the element of 'faery', and Miss Lochhead values especially that kind of faery which yokes holiness with the magic, a combination she finds in George Macdonald and obviously in Lewis and Tolkien, but which she fears may be lacking in some of the most recent books of this genre. Quite a large amount of literature is surveyed, but most of it so allusively that I suspect it will only be illuminating to readers for whom the material is already 'old friends'. In fact, some of the brief outlines given by Miss Lochhead are rather misleading. For instance on p. 99 she summarises Lewis' *The Last Battle* as ending with a victory for the loyal Narnians, who are then said to "gather" in the shed, whereas they are actually driven into it by their triumphant enemies. Also it will puzzle readers who have any feel for the power of names to be told that in *The Tombs of Atuan* the mage is "now bearing his true name, God" (p. 149); in fact he is doing nothing so foolish, and it is a gesture of confidence when he reveals his name to the bewildered priestess of the tombs. But those who know enough about the books discussed to be able to fill out and, where necessary, correct Miss Lochhead's résumés, will find it not disagreeable to wander with her while she comments, sometimes on the biography of the authors, sometimes on the morality or charm of characters and episodes. Anyone looking for a solemn his-

tory, however, will be disappointed. So will anyone looking for serious literary criticism. Little of this is offered, and of that little, even less is enlightening. It seems rather inadequate, for example, to comment on Susan's loss of interest in Narnia that "it hurts us; it is bewildering, like the sudden disappearance, in *The Princess and Curdie*, of the Queen. It seems to indicate a loss of heart in the author." On the contrary, it is one of the very few places where Lewis allows his essentially black and white world to become a little more complex, and indicates that there may be other kinds of failure than utter wickedness. This is just as important as the demonstration in *The Last Battle* that a genuinely devout worshipper of Tash is in fact a worshipper of Aslan (and this too is unclearly reported by Miss Lochhead). Miss Lochhead's requirement of holiness with the magic is important and often illuminating; but her concept of it seems to lack a certain quality of toughness, which makes her sometimes unappreciative. The 'Franciscanism' she commends in Macdonald has perhaps rather too much of Michael Fairless and not enough of St Francis in it. Maybe this is why she seems not really to respond to Ursula le Guin. But for all that there is a quality of faery about this book, a quality perhaps best described as guilelessness, which makes it, not exactly a good book, though there is goodness of many kinds in it, but more than a merely pleasant book. I am glad to have made its acquaintance.

SIMON TUGWELL, O.P.