

perceive—with Professor Balz—‘the stately figure of St Thomas Aquinas beyond Descartes’. (p. viii.) Descartes had, indeed, had a good grounding in the scholastic teaching as embodied in the manuals in use at La Flèche, and at least some first-hand acquaintance with the *Summa*. But for him, as for his contemporaries and most of his predecessors for two centuries, this was no longer the background to, and source of, the intellectual adventure on which they felt themselves engaged. The impact which made Descartes so anxious to defend his reflection against the encroachments of ecclesiastical tradition, while asserting its harmony with orthodox doctrine, came from different quarters.

Professor Balz’s presentation of Descartes and of Cartesian as relevant to the ‘modern mind’ is in terms of this relation of doctrine to inquiry, or, to use his favourite but highly misleading terminology (in the use of which, among other instances, he betrays a very inadequate understanding of the ‘stately figure’ behind Descartes), of *Theologia* to *Scientia*. This is not the sort of question that haunted Descartes, though it was no doubt forced upon him consequent on the gradual crystallisation in his mind of a radically new conception of the nature of rational explanation itself. It is there we must seek what is most distinctive of the Cartesian approach and of its far-reaching effects.

But here we receive little help from Professor Balz. There is no attempt to understand how Descartes came to adopt the models which he employed in his philosophical reflection. Nor are we given any insight into the question—surely no less vital for an understanding of Descartes than of the modern mind—of what place such models have in philosophic reflection and how they are related to the reality pictured in terms of them. In his concern to trace the systematic results of Descartes’ enquiry he goes to the lengths even of distinguishing the man (thinker, writer) René Descartes, from a personification of the exigencies of his ‘system’ which he calls ‘Cartesius’. (Cf. pp. 146 ff. for an instructive instance revealing the dangers of this device.) As Gilson once remarked—in his study, as it happens, of Descartes and the medieval mind—it is the very effort to connect ideas to their time which frees them from it. A closer scrutiny of Descartes’ thinking, set in the context of a study of the ‘inherited conglomerate’ (the phrase is Professor D. M. Mackinnon’s) behind it, would have done a great deal more to give us some insight into his mind, as well as into our own as formed, in part, by this heritage.

A.M.

THE WYNNE DIARIES. Passages selected and edited by Anne Fremantle.
(Oxford World’s Classics; 7s. 6d.)

The habit of keeping diaries, peculiar to the English-speaking world, is a cultural asset of the greatest value to the social student, the historian

and the novelist. The Misses Wynne developed the habit at the early age of nine and ten and never abandoned it.

The diarists give us plentiful glimpses of the life of high society in England and on the Continent at the close of the eighteenth and opening of the nineteenth centuries. The French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars came and went, but dominant in these diaries is the gay life of country house and ballroom, surviving these world-changing events, unaltering and apparently unalterable.

The diarists were fifth in descent from Richard, brother of Sir John Wynn of Gwydir, the North Wales magnate of Elizabethan times. In upbringing they were cosmopolitan, their mother being French and their father's mother Italian. Elizabeth Wynne, responsible for most of the entries, became the wife of Admiral Fremantle, Nelson's second-in-command at the battle of Trafalgar. His account of the engagement and that of Copenhagen is included in the diaries.

Life at the great house of Stowe, the visits there of the French court in exile, balls and salons in London and Venice and Naples, these make up the greater part of the entries, which are seasoned with lively comments on persons and things. There is a contemporary note in some of the homelier entries:

14th, Sunday (Jan. 1802): I am in the agonies of looking out for a cook again; mine which suits in every respect will not stay without a kitchen-maid and exorbitant wages. Servants are great torments.

Wednesday: The cook went; they none like the country.

The 'good old days' of 150 years ago were perhaps in this respect not so very different from our own after all!

R. WYNNE

UNAMUNO. By Arturo Barea; Studies in Modern European Literature and Thought. (Bowes and Bowes; 6s.)

This is a very competent, moderate and fair account of Unamuno's life and works, or most of them, and may be unreservedly recommended to the English reader who wishes to get to know this writer, the greatest influence on the Spain of his generation. There are some emphases and differences of perspective which would not be acceptable to everyone—few would claim, for example, that the Spanish mystics were heterodox (p. 18); not all would phrase so oddly the statement that 'the Eucharist is the core of popular Catholic piety'; Sr Barea over-rates Unamuno's concept of *agonía* without analysing, as one could have wished, his clearest exposition of it, *La agonía del Cristianismo*; nor perhaps should he have omitted Unamuno's study of *Don Quixote* and the most illuminating *Cómo se hace una novela*. These three works might have been admitted to Sr Barea's keen analysis, in exchange, perhaps, for some of the novels, especially as he finds *Amor y pedagogía* unsympathetic. He is excellent,