

case of the theory of 'diminishing cakes'. All human resources, time, manpower, energy, materials, money are limited. Demands always exceed available resources. An organization, such as the Church, disposes of its total resources, its cake, in one of a near-infinite number of ways—the cake can be sliced up in almost any pattern of segments between competitive demands. That segment allowed to the architect for a building becomes *his* complete

cake—over which he rules and which he can slice up in any way he wishes. That slice which goes, say, to providing stained glass, becomes the stained glass artist's cake and so on. Unless this cake slicing operation is open, transparent to all those who finally consume the resources, and this is what politics are about, we may leave many desperately hungry in the end, in many different ways.

THOMAS A. MARKUS

**CLAUDEL: A REAPPRAISAL**, edited by Richard Griffiths. *Rapp and Whiting*, London, 1968.

This symposium containing fourteen essays sets out, on the centenary of Claudel's birth, to acknowledge him in this country and to stimulate interest in his work. For this purpose the editor has gathered together an impressive body of writers, some of whom—Ernest Beaumont, Michael Wood and Edward Lucie-Smith for example—are already well known as students and admirers of Claudel's immense literary output. In his *Introduction* Dr Griffiths rightly underlines one of the main problems that has emerged in Claudel criticism to date, namely disapproval of and objection to his literary work on totally non-literary grounds: his religious and political views and even his personality. But he goes on to argue that far from restricting his theatre, for example, Claudel's Catholicism gives it greater depth and emerges as a central core not only for the complex network of symbols which he constructs, but also as a mean against which his characters' actions and thoughts can be measured.

The book is in three parts. The first aims to offer some new interpretations of a series of individual works; the second (which includes a text by Claudel himself expressing sympathy for Poland at the beginning of the Second World War) presents some hitherto unexplored subjects; the third contains a further two articles which trace some of Claudel's links with England and the English language. As is almost inevitable in a symposium of this kind the standard of essays varies considerably both in terms of their content and the way in which they are written. In the opening section two articles in particular merit close attention. Michael Wood's contribution on the *Soulier de Satin* in which he examines Claudel's view of the value of theatrical representations ('The spectacle is not a playful basis for an earnest metaphor. It is *as* play that the theatre is most valuable, it is *as* play that the metaphor comes nearest to its language' (p. 61)) and Moya

Laverty's study of *Jeanne d'Arc au bûcher*, and in particular her consideration of Claudel's conception of the Virgin Mary which links him with Péguy and Michelet (though not with Bernanos?). Both are well documented and indicate further useful work to be done in these fields. Dr Barnes's article on the 1913 Hellerau production of *L'Annonce faite à Marie* based on a copy of the text which was annotated by Claudel himself, is, however, for all its interest, limited, and the absorbing matter of Claudel's views on the production of this, and indeed other, plays is left, undiscussed, 'to the Claudelians' (p. 46). The two remaining articles in Part One by Bernard Howells on *Partage de Midi* and by Edward Lucie-Smith on the *Cinq grandes Odes* add little that is not already known.

The same mixture reappears in Part Two. The influence of the figure of Divine Wisdom in Claudel's plays is examined by Ernest Beaumont in a carefully documented piece of work that is backed by evidence of some impressive scholarship in the field of Oriental and Russian philosophy. Witold Leitgeber's essay on 'Poland in the life and works of Claudel' while being less central in importance (except for the Ysé-Rose identification and the Polish Fausta in *La Cantate à trois voix*) is compiled with equal care and attention to detail. In this section, too, we find the only extensive study of Claudel's style in Elfrieda Dubois's reflections on Claudel's *verset*. She emphasizes Claudel's continual search for the most appropriate verse forms and also his belief in the poetic quality of prose. Her article concludes with a lucid analysis of two *Cantiques*. This part of the book closes with a description of the scrap-books which Claudel compiled so assiduously especially in his later years. The reproductions of paintings, photographs of performers of his plays and of famous people, odd news items and even accounts of violence are set out for us by Jean Mouton. Clearly

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