

power of production codes or moral classifications to make much difference in the long run. For what he feels to be the greatest danger of the cinema is not that it is sinful, or suggestive, but that it is escapist and unreal and induces a kind of anaesthesia in the addict; and production codes and moral classifications do not often seem to take much account of this. Fr Ludmann would like first-class films to deal with contemporary problems, realistically and seriously, instead of countering danger with a series of negative proscriptions curtailing most ideas of any real vitality. When he comes to the question of faith, where he feels the influence of the cinema could, and should, be much greater, he is full of enterprising ideas and his vision of the cineast, like the Psalmist, praising the wonderful works of God is perhaps not so exotic as it sounds at first.

This is a short book and a provocative one—and many such studies have come from French publishers in the last few years: would that we in England could point to even one similar work written from the intelligent Christian point of view! But we cannot, and the greater number of all serious books on the cinema in this country have come from writers with views very different from ours, to whom we have ceded the day without even a struggle. All the more reason, therefore, to read books like *Cinéma, Foi et Morale* if you can possibly get hold of them.

MARYVONNE BUTCHER

ORGANIZ'D INNOCENCE: The Story of Blake's Prophetic Books. By Margaret Rudd. (Routledge and Kegan Paul; 30s.)

Miss Rudd's purpose is to give 'a sympathetic hearing' to the Blake of the major prophetic books. Her thesis rests on the dangerous assumption that these poems are to be explained by reference to Blake's own life, and is that they are a psychological exploration of 'the fluid dream-like world of breakdown, breakdown above all of the vision that had held life together', leading to a solution in terms of 'reorganiz'd innocence', spiritual wholeness, and 'a mature and undivided Human Love'. Having stated this at length, she gives an exegesis of the poems, quoting extensively but not always accurately.

Miss Rudd is working on a 'hunch' in this unsatisfactory and rather arrogant book, and she quotes her publishers' praise of her 'exciting and original insight'; but her own wide view—for she cautions us against a 'myopic examination' of the books—is obtained only by leaving much out (few before her have found that *The Four Zoas* has a 'simple, almost naïve coherence'). The author often forgets her warning about the ambiguity of Blake's thinking, and assumes a too precise consistency of thought and symbol in order to prove her

thesis. Her interpretation is, in fact, highly subjective, supported by many references to Jungian psychology; and Blake's 'enormously modern insight' turns out to be largely a lecture on How to be Happy Though Married.

There are factual errors which a less cavalier attitude to scholarship might have avoided. Moreover, there is a jarring streak of vulgarity about the writing: the cast of mind which makes Miss Rudd a firm adherent of the punning school of Blakean etymology and leads her to such identifications as 'evil=Eve-ill' and 'despair=dis-pair' is responsible also for the many skittish colloquialisms—Urizen 'goes completely off the rails', Vala 'goes off the deep end', and so on. The references to Swift and Thurber show no great understanding of either of those writers; but the remarkable diagrams at the end do perhaps owe something, inappropriately, to the author of *Let Your Mind Alone*.

R. P. C. MUTTER

VIRGIL: THE AENEID. A new translation by W. F. Jackson Knight. (Penguin Classics; 3s. 6d.)

The 'modern' style in verse translations has produced some remarkable successes (see *The Times Literary Supplement* of November 2, 1956). It aims at a public which is *not* acquainted with the original, and it excludes above all the literary cliché. But a prose translation must resign itself to not communicating the original rhythm, associations and overtones, and must accept the false division of story and conceptual 'prose' meaning from its expression. The *Odyssey* as a story has been an immense success in Dr Rieu's version. Can 'secondary' or literary epic, Virgil's or Milton's, survive being reduced to 'what counts most of all, the story, the drama and the meanings which they reveal'? For Mr Knight, 'the primary need' is 'to keep the narrative clear and fluent', and to let Virgil himself 'pass on what he has to say with as little impeding as possible'. The manner must obviously be that of 'contemporary English, reasonably smooth, and free from any serious jolts' (such as Mr C. Day Lewis's translation not infrequently gives). Mr Knight claims that in Virgil 'there is occasionally an effective colloquialism and even here and there something like slang'; but they are few, compared to the archaisms, and Virgil was famous rather for giving a subtle new turn to ordinary phrases.

Mr Knight begins briskly: 'this is a tale of arms and of a man'. Virgil's first seven lines are one periodic sentence, and become seven main verbs in five sentences. The effect is like that of prose translations of *Beowulf*. 'Out came the wide-meshed nets . . . up came the Trojan party, too, including the delighted Iulus'. If literary cliché is on the whole avoided, a kind of latinized officialese is even cultivated: 'to