

brash, humorous, plain, and predictable to the deft and exquisitely subtle. They must not be taken for granted'. Neither will S. C. Neuman allow us to take Hardy's use of rhythm for granted. For me there has been no better definition of poetry than Hardy's 'Emotion put into Measure', and Dr Neuman demonstrates the importance of understanding how Hardy uses metre, of realising that his prosody has a 'rational content'. The subtle analysis of the metre of 'The Master and the Leaves' is a fine example of modern techniques of criticism at their best, promoting understanding through awareness of the existence of variant readings, and it is rewarding to find evidence that the *Variorum* edition of the poetry is also helping understanding. May *Variorum* editions of Hardy's novels be not long delayed!

The central four essays have as subject matter the relationship between two of the novels and certain poems ('The Mellstock Quire and Tess in Hardy's Poetry' by Rosemary L. Eakins); a consideration of Hardy's unhappiness and a crisis in his career in the 1890s in the light of his response to the Oedipus plays of Sophocles ('Thoughts from Sophocles: Hardy in the '90s' by Jeremy V. Steele); a study of what Hardy and Meredith had in common in subject and technique ('Thomas Hardy and George Meredith' by Cornelia Cook); and an examination of the 'large controlling ideas' behind *The Dynasts* ('Hardy's Inconsistent Spirits and the Philosophical Form of *The Dynasts*' by G. Glen Wickens). If these are not so important and rewarding as the first three, they are in their different ways all competent and useful contribu-

tions to our knowledge. Rosemary Eakins, for example, makes a helpful and comprehensive summary of the poems which have links with *Under the Greenwood Tree* and *Tess*, even though I should not want to go along with her in seeing the 'Quire' poems as a conscious attempt by Hardy to make amends for the burlesque treatment of the quire in the novel.

In the final four essays we are intensely involved with the nature of Hardy's thought and its expression in verse. In 'Hardy and "The Cell of Time"' Patricia Ingham describes the recurring features of his treatment of time, and, in a thoughtful and stimulating essay, concludes that it is 'retrospective, denaturing, static, claustrophobic, and largely inescapable'. Simon Gatrell in 'Travelling Man' very cleverly explores Hardy's use of travelling as a metaphor, and, in doing so, makes some illuminating comments on the use of repetitive structures with incremental effects, while Jon Stallworthy in the most esoteric of all the essays looks at Hardy's fascination with the moon goddess. In the most difficult and philosophic of the essays Patricia Clements describes some of the ways in which he measured and corrected 'the mind's formalizations by submitting its experience to reconsideration'. This leads her to some valuable insights into his exploration of reality, his patterns of repetition or return, his use of an imagery of fire and strong light, and into his skill in progressively redefining the words he uses. The quality of mind and research exhibited here is typical of the whole book and bodes well for future Hardy scholarship.

JAMES GIBSON

PREOCCUPATIONS: Selected Prose 1968-1978 by Seamus Heaney, *Faber & Faber*, London 1980, pp 224 £7.95.

SELECTED POEMS 1965-1975 by Seamus Heaney, *Faber & Faber*, London 1980, pp 136 £3.95 and £1.95.

Preoccupations comprises half-a-dozen public lectures topped up with a dozen review pieces and some short autobiographical vignettes. It's a genial, warm, enjoyable book, but I didn't find myself particularly engaged, excited or even illuminated

by it. The lectures rarely display the sharper edges of critical analysis but mainly offer the friendly feel of a poet mulling over the concerns of colleagues among a fellowship of practitioners: quotations from the poems, journals, workbooks or

Wordsworth, Yeats, Hopkins, interweave with quietly evocative accounts of their lives, intentions and performances. Heaney himself comments on a letter from Hopkins to Patmore, discussing Keats: 'As is so often the case when a poet is diagnosing the condition of another, Hopkins is here offering us something of a self-portrait.' And Heaney's own 'preoccupations' are obviously made apparent in these treatments of others; they are: voice, sex, place.

Place is the most overt. The volume opens with compact memories of Mossbawn and Belfast and there are lectures on 'The Sense of Place' (Kavanagh, John Montague) and 'Englands of the Mind' (a nice grouping of Hughes, Hill, Larkin), a radio talk on 'Early Irish Nature Poetry', and a review of the *Penguin Book of English Pastoral Verse*. But that review indicates a general drawback of the collection: Heaney is obviously a bit uneasy about the 'Marxist' approach of John Barrell and John Bull, the editors, but the review slides past his disagreement with a kind of shrug: 'While there was indeed mystification (a word I am reluctant to regard as *altogether* pejorative in poetry) of economic and social realities in Renaissance and eighteenth-century pastoral....' (p 175). Heaney does pursue his case, but in a rather muffled, unpressuring way that fits well with the bland feel of the *TLS* in which the piece appeared. A pity – though also an indication of something the whole collection communicates: that Heaney would seem to be a genuinely *pleasant* bloke.

This sense of issues not fully pinned down is there also in his concern with the poet's "voices". Twice he quotes Yeats: 'all the old writers, the masculine writers of the world, wrote to be spoken or sung, and in a later age to be read aloud for hearers who had to understand swiftly or not at all' (p 73, 87). John B. Yeats's quoted comment on his son – 'his bad metres arise from his composing in a loud voice manipulating of course the quantities to his taste' (p 71) – echoes an earlier remark taken from Hazlitt (p 64): 'There is a *chant* in the recitation of both Coleridge and Wordsworth, which acts as a spell upon the hearer, and disarms the judgment. Perhaps they

have deceived themselves by making habitual use of this ambiguous accompaniment'. And what reminds us of Heaney's response to Stevie Smith's 'memorable voice' (p 199) and of his account of 'finding' *his* own voice in the writing of 'Digging' (p 43):

Finding a voice means that you can get your own feeling into your own words and that your words have the feel of you about them; and I believe that it may not even be a metaphor, for a poetic voice is probably very intimately connected with the poet's natural voice, the voice that he hears as the ideal speaker of the lines he is making up.

Hearing Heaney read his poems aloud or even listening to the radio version of his lecture 'Feelings into Words' stamps the memory with a strong inflexion, audible in subsequent readings of one's own: the vowels are modified in imitation, the poems assert a subtler strength. But there are two large issues here, which Heaney only obliquely acknowledges.

The first concerns the social role of poets within different systems of reproduction and distribution of poems: the shift from words allied to music, dramatic action or public recitation to words sculptured on the page, texts brimming with the silences of late modernism. Heaney barely nods at this latter possibility for poetry (eg; p 81) but it needs a more explicit probing if his own situation and poetic practice as a peculiarly "parochial" poet (his own epithet) is to be fully registered. The other issue underpins this. Heaney's firm sense of *presence*, of the *self*, in poetry is summoned in his notion of 'technique' as distinct from 'craft'

Technique entails the watermarking of your essential patterns of perception, voice and thought into the touch and texture of your lines; it is that whole creative effort of the mind's and body's resources to bring the meaning of experience within the jurisdiction of form. Technique is what turns, in Yeat's phrase, "the bundle of accident and incoherence that sits down to breakfast" into "an idea, something intended, complete".

A reader alert to Derrida's linking of the idealist metaphysics of 'presence' to the foregrounding of 'voice' and to Lacan's further linking of ego-centricity to phallogocentrism will not be surprised to find Heaney constantly drawing upon a *sexual* vocabulary and upon dubious distinctions of *gender* in his critical comments, his characteristic analyses. A telling example from page 88:

So I am setting up two modes and calling them masculine and feminine – but without the Victorian sexist overtones ... In the masculine mode, the language functions as a form of address, of assertion or command ... whereas words in the feminine mode behave with the lover's come-hither instead of the athlete's display ...

This is so pervasive a feature of the book (cf. pp 20, 34, 57, 80, 83, 94 etc.) and so informs Heaney's response to individual poems (e.g. pp 42, 53, 78) that it indicates the most basic 'preoccupation' of all, yet the theme of sex is rarely confronted directly, in all its Irish, Catholic,

resonances: only in the discussion of Kavanagh's *The Great Hunger* (pp 124-6) are those dimensions explicit.

The back cover proclaims 'Everyone knows by now that Heaney is a major poet'. Yet the thought nags that until Heaney can somehow more absolutely grapple with the *troubling* dimensions of voice, sex, place – with precisely those more intractable relations between, say, Catholic metaphysics and Irish sexual repression – he will not have sounded his full and proper 'voice'. Only the poems can do that, but in re-reading the *Selected Poems* and *Field Work* one senses again that between the political and the metaphysical (between Brecht and Stevens, say) there is often (though not always) only a thin terrain, that of the exact mundane or the merely autobiographical epiphany, the domestic moment or the elegy for friends. For a major poet it does not seem, quite, enough.

BERNARD SHARRATT

CHRIST: THE CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE IN THE MODERN WORLD by Edward Schillebeeckx. SCM, London, 1980. pp 925 £19.50.

Few of us can yet have digested the first volume of Edward Schillebeeckx's massive essay in Christology, reviewed here about the time that he was being "interviewed" by theologians of the Holy Office in Rome about its orthodoxy (*New Blackfriars*, December 1979). One of the three interviewing theologians, Jean Galot S J, himself the author of a large book on Christology of a metaphysically speculative kind, went on Vatican Radio a day or two before the interview to say that Schillebeeckx was in his opinion a heretic, and one of the others, Albert Patfoort O P, to judge by the lectures which he used to give in Paris twenty years ago and also by his equally massive and even more metaphysically speculative writings on St Thomas Aquinas' theories about the ontological implications of the hypostatic union, would not find Schillebeeckx's intentions or methods at all congenial or even intelligible. To the best of our knowledge at the present time (October 1980), however,

the Holy Office has made no judgment on Schillebeeckx's book. It would of course have been very unfair to condemn the work on the evidence of the first volume, which was all that had been delated to Rome. This second volume, from a different publisher and at more than twice the price, although with 150 pages more, has appeared in English with commendable speed (the Dutch original came out in 1977); but the translation, by John Bowden, shows signs of haste. This second volume clearly does not conclude Schillebeeckx's Christology: while not committing himself very far he does say that it might now be possible, after these two volumes, "to make a beginning on what is called 'Christology'" (p 25). The gulf between him and the neo-Thomist theologians of the Holy Office is due far more to differences in Catholic faith – not that *that* is an easy or innocuous distinction!

This volume falls into four sections of very uneven length. In the first volume