

so on: perhaps not saying much that is new, but many will find it helpful and illuminating to find so much good sense inside the covers of a single book. On the three specific questions in sexual ethics that have been preoccupying the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith, readers may be reassured to learn that Groegen reserves genital love for marriage (page 184), wants homosexual relationships to remain non-genital (page 189), and regards masturbation as sometimes but not always wrong (page 201). The fourteen pages of bibliography, finally, are not the least valuable section of a book which, in the

area of celibacy and sexuality, casts an unaccustomedly courageous and exceptionally sane light on a difficult topic. It is surprising to find no reference to the work of Jack Dominian, and disappointing that the relation between Christian celibacy and celibacy in other religious traditions, though raised, is never fully explored. To that objection, however, Don Groegen would no doubt reply that the spiritual dimension of celibacy, rather than the merely sexual one, requires another book. One can only hope that he will continue to have the time to reflect needed, and the friendship to support him, to write it.

FERGUS KERR OP

MARX, by M. Evans. *George Allen and Unwin*, London, 1975. 215 pp. £4.60; £2.30 paperback.

KARL MARX: HIS LIFE AND THOUGHT, by David McLellan. *Macmillan*, London, 1973. xiv + 498 pp. £6.95; £2.95 paperback.

MARX, by David McLellan. *Collins* (Fontana Modern Masters), London, 1975. 92 pp. 50p.

Dr McLellan's biography of Marx will be a central text for a very long time. He rightly claims that a new biography is necessitated by the appearance, since Mehring's biography in 1918, of the unexpurgated Marx-Engels correspondence and such important works of Marx as the *Paris Manuscripts* and the *Grundrisse*. The strictly biographical strand of his book does indeed draw on the correspondence; it also, and perhaps even more importantly, draws on the vast amount of information on such topics as artisanal communism in France and Germany in the 1840s, and the structure and policies of the First International in the '60s and '70s, which has been amassed by labour historians in this century. We derive a full and balanced picture of Marx's life in its various phases, and are reminded of how his and his family's expectations of living standards must be taken into account if we are to accept as genuine his complaints of 'dire poverty' on a relatively large income. Dr McLellan is a little reluctant to give a definite judgement on Marx's character and 'psychobiography'. This is a pity, although his reticence is understandable in the face of the obvious dangers of such speculation. He does make some important relevant points, for example about Marx's temptation towards empty polemic and his unscrupulousness towards Bakunin and some others; but I would have liked,

instead of the short pen-portraits from a number of contemporaries collected at the end of the book, to be given either Dr McLellan's own summation or his argument why the question should be left unanswered.

This is, however, in context a small quibble. What the biography does excellently is to situate the stages of Marx's developing thought and political activity; on the latter, the chapters on Cologne in 1848-9 and on the International combine many strands clearly and most helpfully. The work goes a large way to correcting the impression of over-emphasis on the 'young Marx' which some commentators have received from the author's previous writings. We are told, correctly, that the 1844 *Paris Manuscripts*, although rich and crucial, 'were in fact no more than a starting-point for Marx' (p. 128). It becomes clear that the emphasis of previous writings from Dr McLellan's pen is due as much to the need to correct distortions of Marx's development, and to integrate unrecognised elements (such as the Hegelianism of the *Grundrisse*), as it is to any predilection for the 'early writings'. This need has however left its mark on the present volume in one important respect, which is perhaps its only significant defect. This is under-emphasis on the mature economic writings.

One might even argue that more should be made of the 'strictly em-

pirical' sections on Wages, Rent and Profit in the *Paris Manuscripts* than is made on pp. 106-8. Be that as it may, the real gap begins with the treatment of the *Grundrisse*. Dr McLellan's selections (*Marx's Grundrisse*, London, 1971) have been attacked by some critics as partial, over-emphasising the Hegelian and 'philosophical' aspects of the work. This charge is unfair, in that the task performed by the selections is to bring out precisely those elements of the *Grundrisse* (written in 1857-8) which give the lie to theories of an alleged 'break' between the early and the 'mature' works. But in the overall treatment required by an intellectual biography (at least one strand of the present work's undertakings) we may fairly require more on the *specifically economic* theory in the *Grundrisse*—money, surplus value, profits, crisis, capital formation, use value and exchange value, machinery and so forth—than we get on pp. 290-303, which present the social theory of capitalism almost to the exclusion of the technical economics. This defect persists into the discussion of *Capital*. It emerges most clearly in the summary and dismissal of Volume 2 *in seven lines!* Volume 2 is essential to any understanding of Marx's theory of how capitalism works *as a going concern*: he spells out the vast process of the circulation of capital from money to forces of production to commodity and back, via exchange, to money again. He discusses the influence of time on the different branches of this life-cycle, and deals with the relations between the two 'departments' of the economy, producing production and consumption. There is much else besides, all of which needs to be given in a discussion of Marx's life *and thought*.

There are a few more quibbles. For one thing, the proof-reading could have been a lot better, as it left a relatively high number of misprints and repetitions of words in the final text. One point of substance: page 112 tells us that in the *Paris Manuscripts* Marx argued that 'social labour was the source of all value', whereas page 162 (note 3) supports Mandel's over-stated thesis that in 1844 Marx actually *rejected* the labour theory of value.

Apart from the omission of a large part of the economics, the book has no important defect. One omission which some will condemn, but quite wrongly, is that of discussion

of contemporary controversies in Marxism. Of course the point of Marxism is revolutionary practice informed by theory, and of course, therefore, what really matters is what Marx means today. But precisely for that reason it is good to have a thorough account which sets the works in the context of their time and tells us what Marx meant when writing them. To tie the account to the fashionable interpretations of the late 1960s and early 1970s would render it almost unintelligible, and of very limited use, to the reader of even five years hence.

What is new and interesting about Dr McLellan's latest book—his contribution to the *Modern Masters* series—is that here for the first time he does take on some of the modern interpretations on their own ground. He traces the development of Marxism through the Social Democrats to Lenin, suggesting that the Mensheviks were nearer than Lenin to Marx's own approach to society and revolution. He discusses the impact of the rediscovered early writings on the orthodoxy of the '20s and '30s, and criticises the contemporary interpretation of Louis Althusser. It is of course too brief, but that is as much due to the series' format as to anything else: one would like to see Dr McLellan move into these areas in their own right, now that he has set Marx scholarship firmly on the course to a comprehensive and rigorous understanding. This short book will be a useful introduction to those new to, or only marginally curious about, Marx's thought, which is exactly what the series intends to do for its subjects.

Dr Evans's book is very good indeed. He manages the rare achievement of writing a full and clear medium-length introduction to Marx which manages at the same time to make original and profound points about some of the thorniest problems of 'Marxology'. The reason for the book's success in this endeavour is, I believe, that it is throughout informed by an interest in Marx's thought as a *theory* meant to explain the world and guide its transformation. Where the McLellan biography gives us the context, aims and content of each work, Dr Evans goes on from this point to discuss how it all hangs together as a scientific and practice-guiding view of the world. One point on which he argues excellently is that of the role of *general*

categories in Marx. There is a tendency, fostered by among others Mandel and Martin Nicolaus, to make Marx's assertions historically specific to the point of incoherence. On pages 53, 57 and 94-5, on the subjects of 'production in general' and 'human nature', Dr Evans strikes just the right balance between the specific and those generalisations which are required to make any theory of history intelligible. He also makes some very good points about the need to read each of Marx's writings in its context, and not to quote without saying when the quotation was written. This leads him quite rightly to condemn Wagner and Strauss (*sic*) for interpreting the programme of the *Communist Manifesto* (1848) in terms of an economic distinction which Marx had not yet evolved. One slip which he makes is of some importance: on page 93 he attributes to the capitalist an 'activity' of alienation when the text should read a 'state of alienation'.

A particularly good section is that, in the early part of the book, on artisanal Communism and Marx's problems in directing it towards the supersession of artisanal by industrial structures. But perhaps the core of the book's theoretical interest is to be found in the extremely able tying together of what Evans calls the 'structural concepts'—social formation, mode of production, forces and relations of production and so on—of Marx's theory. I would not agree with all of Dr Evans's arguments, particu-

larly where he points out (quite correctly) that besides 'determines' Marx also uses such verbs as 'conditions', 'corresponds' and so on for the relation postulated between the economic structure and the rest of society. Of course he does, but even if he had always used 'determines' most criticisms of the theory would not in fact be valid. Much of the time when Marx talks of 'determination' he is talking in terms of formal rather than efficient causation. In any case, whether thinking of formal or efficient causation, he never seriously suggests that *anything* could be said on its own to account for either the existence or all the characteristics of anything else. Thus the crux of Marx's theory will have to be not *whether* or 'to what extent' but *how* the economy determines the shape of society; the answer will lie in a notion of the functional priority of the 'first historical act' of material production, so that social structures will tend to come into line with economic requirements rather than *vice versa*. By the way, it is not true that 'A corresponds with B' is a statement of mere correlation devoid of further implications (p. 65): it matters a great deal whether you correspond with my wishes or I with yours. But my disagreement on such points is merely evidence of the fact that Dr Evans has managed to combine a good general account of Marx's thought with provocative and profound contributions to major theoretical problems.

JOHN MAGUIRE

PILGRIMAGE: An Image of Mediaeval Religion, by Jonathan Sumption. *Faber*, 1975. 302 pp. £6.95.

This could be judged either as a study of Mediaeval pilgrimages or of Mediaeval religion. As the first it is notably successful. The author deals with the cult of relics, the pursuit of the miraculous and the conception of the penitential pilgrimage and then with details of the journeys and the shrines. He has gathered a great mass of fascinating facts.

It is only some of the deductions that could be criticised. At times they are impregnable—notably on the effects of popular devotion upon official teaching: 'The laity accepted the efficacy of indulgences for the dead for many years before the Popes granted them in formal terms. No genuine letter of indulgence promised

the release of souls from purgatory until the middle of the fifteenth century. The earliest known example dates only from 1475' (p. 293).

On the other hand some generalisations seem simply untenable—for example, that 'Profound pessimism was one of the principal characteristics of Mediaeval religion' (p. 21). But *The Tale of the Incestuous Daughter*, *The Hermit and the Outlaw* and *The Vernon Miracles of Mary* all illustrate the infinite compassion of God coming in answer to a quite inadequate repentance. They represent a mass of popular literature from all over Europe. Few statements could be more misleading than 'Belief in a merciful God was even