

Mysticism. Each section contains a number of chapters. Emphasis is laid throughout on Teilhard's Christianity, and on his theological orthodoxy. Non-Christian readers might find themselves increasingly irritated after the first section. But Teilhard is nothing if not whole, and to see him rightly our secular humanist friends must not simply pick out the phenomenological bits that make most sense and most appeal to them. It is in his apologetics, and subsequently in his mysticism, that Teilhard makes the most powerful case this century has produced *ad majorem dei gloriam*. One now knows the book to recommend to a constant stream of interested enquirers, and I wish it the widest possible circulation.

Dr Gray's book represents a rather more than usually valuable return (so far as the general public is concerned) on work put into a doctoral thesis. Though the style is somewhat breathy at times, and exhibits some of the worst features of American 'doctoralese', yet considerable thought and scholarship have gone into the making of the book. The present reviewer, writing in *Blackfriars* in 1959, put it that 'Teilhard combines, as both scientist and mystic, the Western obsession with the Manifold in all degrees of particularity, with the Eastern vision of the One'. This single theme is here examined with care, the source-material being works published in French and English up to 1965. Dr Gray is especially concerned to analyse some of those phrases that seem likely, in time, to become part of our linguistic heritage, phrases such as *Creative Union*, the *Law of Complexity-Consciousness*, and *Union Differentiates*. At first sight these seem to be no more than somewhat cryptic vapourings or exhalations. They are here subjected to scholarly analysis in the light of Teilhard's understanding of the spiritualization of matter, of the forces that could make such a process possible, and of the forces that hinder it. Starting from what Teilhard considered to be the initial or primary state of matter, that of

'pure multiplicity' or 'non-being', he builds up the Teilhardian thesis that it is through the process of unification of subatomic, then atomic, then molecular and later biomolecular particles (and so on) that evolution has in fact 'created' the astonishing diversity of forms that constitute today's world. And yet, of course, a fundamental unity underlies this diversity. In his concluding summary, the author says (pp. 156-7): 'Teilhard was a man driven by a passion for unity, and his efforts to synthesize the various spheres of human reflection and activity constitute one of the most important aspects of his overall attempt to resolve the problem of the one and the many, to create unity where pluralistic fragmentation appears to reign supreme. . . . For Teilhard, the problem of the one and the many is fundamentally a threefold problem. When man reflects upon the relationship between spirit and matter, or between the person and the community, or between God and his creatures, in each instance, according to Teilhard, he is brought face to face with the problem of the one and the many. And in each case Teilhard tries to understand these relationships in such a way that the multiple can be unified without being destroyed. His thought is not monistic but, rather, dipolar or dialectical in character, seeking always to safeguard diversity within unity. The essence of Teilhard's approach is encapsulated in his own formula "union differentiates". This is Teilhard's law, if one may so state the matter, and at no point in his system does he violate it in the interests of a simplistic solution which would sacrifice authentic union in favour of an undifferentiated identity.'

In his early essay *Creative Union* (see *Writings in Time of War*, p. 156), Teilhard expressed it thus: 'Creation is brought about by an act of uniting; and true union cannot be effected except by creating. These are two correlative propositions.' Dr Gray, in this important book, has drawn out the meaning and implications of this correlation. BERNARD TOWERS

**MYTH: ITS MEANING AND FUNCTION IN ANCIENT AND OTHER CULTURES**, by G. S. Kirk. *Cambridge University Press*, 1970. 298 pp. £3.25 (65s.).

This book is the text of the annual Sather Lectures at the University of California at Berkeley. I had the pleasure of attending these lectures in spring of 1969, and therefore reading the text, which is an expanded version of the lectures, was an added enjoyment.

However, problems that were not evident in the oral delivery become apparent in the reading of the text.

Professor Kirk is a classical scholar and he states at the outset of his text that he wishes to see more *rapprochement* between his discipline

and cultural anthropology. In fact, he reviews the accomplishments of anthropologists, ranging from Taylor to Lévi-Strauss, in the field of myth, folktale and ritual, generally criticizing all of them for their unified theories of myth, which he feels are too simplistic and unfaithful to the data. He admires both the functionalist Malinowski and the structuralist Lévi-Strauss, but he feels that their methods impose limitations that do not allow for a wide interpretation of myth. Unfortunately, at this point, Kirk has set down a path not well suited to his skills: whereas classical scholarship deduces most of its conclusions from textual evidence (and largely ignores the context of the text), anthropology is precisely the study of this context (i.e. the society). This difference has rather serious implications as Kirk proceeds toward a textual-cultural analysis of myth.

In the first chapter Kirk separates the concept of myth from ritual, a conjunction he blames upon a series of anthropologists who did not look carefully enough at the problem. He then suggests that the word 'myth' be best reserved for sacred tales, but fails to show how with his criteria of 'serious matter' and divine agency he differs from Malinowski's theories. He suggests that analysing myth can be done textually, that is, separate from the social context. This he must do as he is not an ethnographer. Unfortunately, he has fallen between the functionalist stool and the structuralist one, making use of the material from both sides. He unites these two elements in his treatment of the Trobriand tale (he calls it a myth), analysing the tale out of its cultural context.

At this point, Kirk turns to Lévi-Strauss and attempts to evaluate his theories. He concentrates upon certain aspects of structuralism, namely, the concept of binary operation and the underlying idea of the meaning of structure. But he fails to see the question of 'relation of relations' that is so important to Lévi-Strauss. He raises objections to Lévi-Strauss' concept of structure (versus system) and asks whether myth does in fact perform this function of mediation of contradiction that is so central to the structuralist method. But there is evidence that he has not seen through to the question of structure as the 'algebra of relations', a fundamental error that would reduce Kirk's analysis to some sort of content linked structure, certainly a mis-reading of Lévi-Strauss.

The third and fourth chapters centre around the mechanics of Kirk's theory. He examines

a series of myths in a quasi-structuralist manner, some very well (the Greek myths involving the Centaurs and the Cyclopes) and others with less accuracy (the Gilgamesh epic). He does bring out one crucial aspect of the myth problem: the contradiction (manifested in the structure and content) between nature and culture and the associations with the life-death awareness. Unfortunately, at one point Kirk states that there are structural similarities between Babylonian myths, but then goes on to list content similarities, again confusing the relationship (structure) with the content of the relationship. It was with great care that Lévi-Strauss insisted upon structure as the 'algebra of relations'. But when dealing with the problem of Greek myths, Kirk is essentially dealing with textual criticism, rather than the vast ethnographic subject that anthropology really is. But his analysis of the Centaurs and the Cyclopes as culture-nature mediators is good indeed.

The last two chapters focus more clearly on the areas that are the province of the author. Kirk attempts to evaluate Hesiod in terms of his contribution to the mythic tradition. His collection of Greek tales and myths has been seen as the watershed of Greek thought: the abandonment of fantasy and the beginnings of speculative thought. Kirk insists that this view rests upon Hesiod's position: he was merely the first to transcribe the myths. But in fact, argues Kirk, this process had begun centuries earlier and culminated in the outbreak of philosophic musings under the pre-Socratics. The tragedians of the fifth century are not trying to resurrect myth, but to reconstruct a new mythology out of the remnants of the older, more fantasy-oriented genre. This is well within the competence of Kirk, and certainly some of the best analysis in the book.

Kirk at last sums up his conclusions: Lévi-Strauss is really sound (he has told us something new about myth by stressing the structure); we can see that myth and ritual are not interdependent, even though they may be interrelated; myth tells us something profound not only about our world, but the way we look at our world. Kirk insists that more will be discovered as the texts are reread, but this places us right back at the beginning with the problem of textual criticism and ethnographic context evidence, the fundamental difference between the approach of the anthropologist and the classicist.

The most serious drawback in the study is

Kirk's excursion into the Structuralist camp. His mistaken reading of Lévi-Strauss, his insistence upon speculative, intellectual faculties in myth and his conflicting definitions of myth, tale, folktale and story tend to confuse the reader. It is also distressing that he ignores Lévi-Strauss' point that the variations of mythic structure, which pose and solve problems, are really the most important (not

content similarities). In spite of his reading of Lévi-Strauss and Malinowski, Kirk does work well in the area of classical scholarship and treats the question of mythic evolution in Greece with an experienced hand. If one is aware of the problems in his analysis of the functionalist and structuralist viewpoints, the book makes interesting and good reading, if at times a bit technical. MICHAEL WEST OBORNE

**BEHIND APPEARANCE: A study of the relations between painting and the natural sciences in this century,** by C. H. Waddington. *Edinburgh University Press*, 1969. 256 pp. £9.

There seems to be a general and growing opinion amongst the cognoscenti that science and technology have affected and are affecting profoundly the whole nature of our cultural environment, and this is supposed to explain why modern art, music, poetry, cinema and drama are 'difficult'—because so are modern science and modern life. In other words, C. P. Snow, as Susan Sontag contends, is wrong, and there are not two cultures, but one. C. H. Waddington, Professor of Animal Genetics at Edinburgh University, implicitly endorses this point of view as far as painting is concerned, and spells out some of the connections between painting and science from the cubists to Pop Art and the 'Hard Edge' geometrizers.

The book divides fairly clearly into two parts, corresponding to the periods before and after the Second World War. Before then, one revolutionary scientific idea which had to some extent diffused into general consciousness was Einstein's Theory of Relativity, which told us that our intuitive ideas of fixed space and absolute time were wrong, and that space and time were interdependent. To oversimplify the argument somewhat drastically, Waddington claims that cubism was a reflection of this new importance given to three-dimensional space, with time as the 'fourth dimension'. This was not conscious or deliberate on the part of the painters, and the author makes the connection in a generalized and open-minded way; for example, Chirico has in common with scientists merely a 'sense of the marvellous'. In the same period, the Dada painters are most remarkable, in this context, for their reaction against the rationality of science, for the influence of biological ideas (Arp); and the Surrealists for their debt to Freud—a debt which they paid off rather over-enthusiastically.

It is the period after the Second World War

that is the richest in material for Waddington. He explains at some length the scientific developments of the quantum theory in physics, and the roles of chance and of order and chaos in biology, and then expounds the ideas of Whitehead, whose philosophy of 'everything is part of everything else' has obvious roots in Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle and the resultant 'fuzziness' and inexactness of our intuitive description of the atomic and sub-atomic world. And so armed with this tool for interpretation, it is but a short step to begin to appreciate de Kooning and Jackson Pollock, and indeed Rothko. This section is long and interesting, and to attempt a summary would be unjust to the author's careful and ungeneralized treatment of his theme.

Richard Hamilton, Roy Lichtenstein and the other Pop artists are exploring the technological, rather than the scientific, aspects of our world; and Op art is not so influenced by science as we might think. Finally, there are some very interesting remarks about Giacometti's realism; his 'insistence on the otherness of things, and that what we know about them is not their own private essence, but the influence they radiate on their surroundings'. Professor Waddington is surely right in seeing this as profoundly influenced by modern science.

An extremely interesting issue that arises during the book is a consideration of the *activities* of science and painting, and there are extensive quotations from scientists and painters about their work. Thus Jackson Pollock: 'When I am in my painting, I am not aware of what I am doing. It is only after a sort of "get acquainted" period that I see what I have been about. I have no fears about making changes, destroying the image, etc., because the painting has a life of its own.' Compare this with Heisenberg: 'In science man confronts himself alone.'