This raises even wider issues which are seldom merely academic. It is not simply that theologians or historians sometimes share a common outlook which is not reflected on other or more popular levels, but that local conditions often seem to present greater practical barriers to unity than points of scholarship or even belief. Without going into the question of intercommunion, it must be said that unlike other Christians, many Roman Catholics only seem to show a guarded welcome to those non-Catholics using their churches or a moderate enthusiasm for common services. This presumably is not the result of historical or theological convictions, nor due to any lack of opportunity, but might well reflect a concern to avoid provoking a hostile local reaction. Nor can these irritations always be reduced to existing divisions between more conservative or less liberal attitudes. In England, for example, it is at least surprising that some of the most radical Anglicans never seem to question the fact of the Establishment. For Roman Catholics, aware that the growth of political and religious equality partly coincided with a conscious effort to defend the Established Church, it would appear ungrateful, if not unnecessary, now to call it into question, but other nonconformists might be less indifferent and their feelings should not be ignored. Furthermore and unfortunately, the temptation to continue to score apologetic points still remains even among those who would be expected to know better. Whereas some of the comments of our non-Catholic friends on *Humanae Vitae* were fair and reasonable, others were less than helpful, while the over-ready invocations of the rights of conscience as a principle of the Reformation were frankly unhistorical. In short, it would seem that much remains to be done, even when the academics have finished their work.

J. DEREK HOLMES

ELIZABETH'S GREETING, by Rosemary Haughton. *Constable*, London, 1968. 256 pp. 30s.

I must confess to a slight twinge of disappointment that Rosemary Haughton's first novel is a historical one. Serious imaginative literature today is so saturated in alienation, despair, disgust and irony—attitudes that we are inclinded to think modern experience compels upon the artist—that it would have been interesting to see whether Mrs Haughton could carry over into fiction something of that positive and liberating, yet adult and intelligent, faith she has expressed in her discursive writing. The life and times of St Elizabeth of Hungary is, however, too remote a subject to test Mrs Haughton's powers in this respect, even though she tells us in her Introduction that she was drawn to it precisely because of the parallels it offered with our own era:

> There is in the early thirteenth century, and in our own time, a breaking down of accepted social, religious, and political structures, and a ruthless exercise of power within the existing structures, covered by a veneer of religious or humanitarian concern. There is an eruption of wild doctrines of revolution, both political and mystical in character, and finding their focus in the newly self-conscious urban proletariat. There is the resulting violence and fanaticism, and calculated techniques of suppression. There is a cult of erotic escapism, which develops into an elaborate and serious philosophy of life, as a protest against the inhuman power politics of the time.

The narrative method of the book is well devised to draw these threads together. Although Elizabeth is at the centre of the novel, there is no attempt to get inside her consciousness. Instead we get a multiplicty of viewpoints—poets and peasants, nobles and religious—for each of whom her sanctity represents both an enigma and a promise. For the poets Wolfram and Gottfried she represents more adequately than their own words the mystical meaning they are searching for in their stories of the Grail, and of Tristan and Isolde. For her husband, Ludwig, she is an exhausting and perpetual challenge to reconcile worldly power with Christian duty, carnal with spiritual love. For the ordinary people she offers the possibility of deliverance from disease, penury and injustice. Through such various points of view we follow the life of Elizabeth: the childhood espousal to Ludwig, the halcyon days of their early married life, the bad times of plague and famine in which Elizabeth finds her vocation among the poor, the harsh régime of her spiritual adviser Konrad, the resentments and intrigues of the nobility, the death of Ludwig on the Crusade, the expulsion of Elizabeth from her home, and her premature death.

This is a carefully composed book, absorbing and informative as historical narrative, thought-

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0028428900063058 Published online by Cambridge University Press

ful and thought-provoking in its probing into divine and secular values. Yet although it is marvellously free from the limiting conventions and clichés of hagiography, it succeeds only spasmodically as a literary fiction, if we are to judge it by the high standards Mrs Haughton deserves. I think the reason may be that she has not yet found an imaginative language that can easily carry the weight of meaning she intends. Take, for example, this crucial and representative passage, describing the last embrace of Ludwig and Elizabeth:

> The knowledge of her, and the nearness of parting, flowed together in two streams of awareness that could not meet, and in the gap between them there was a huge emptiness that called to him. Then, while his hands were on her warm body, he knew, for the first time, the demand of a total love. There was no room to explain and disguise, no protection from the image of her fiery sanctity, no argument that could make it necessary to keep her apart, in subjection, lest she engulf him. There was nothing between them, not even Elizabeth herself, because it was not Elizabeth who called to him, but only the deep, terrifying waters of love itself.

Now, this is far from being badly written; but it seems to me that the strength and force of the passage is in its second sentence, and that the surrounding sentences do not give greater definition or concreteness to that sentence, but rather blur it. The images (streams, emptiness calling, fiery image, waters calling) do not in the last analysis connect logically, and the syntax of the last sentence is puzzling. The language does not, in other words, enact a particular sequence of thought and emotion, but gropes after it. It might be argued that such meanings can only be groped after; but I do not think Mrs Haughton would wish to take refuge in that position—she is too obviously concerned with precise expression and communication.

DAVID LODGE

CONRAD: THE PSYCHOLOGIST AS ARTIST, by Paul Kirschner. *Oliver and Boyd*, Edinburgh, 1968. Pp. vii-xii + 3-298. 70s.

E. M. FORSTER'S OTHER KINGDOM, by Denis Godfrey. *Oliver and Boyd*, Edinburgh, London, 1968. Pp. v-vii + 1-228. 45s.

These two books are recent additions to Oliver and Boyd's Biography and Criticism series. Both cover in the main familiar ground. Mr Godfrey offers us a chapter on three of Forster's short stories and further chapters on each of the five novels. Mr Kirschner includes discussions of all of Conrad's most frequently discussed works: *Heart of Darkness*, *Lord Jim*, *Nostromo*, *The Secret Agent*, etc. What is new about both books is no more than the point of view from which they are written, the perspective from which these exhaustively explored and mapped countries of the imagination are reviewed once again. The burden borne by the thesis which provides the structure for each book is in other words a very heavy one: it provides the principal reason for publication. In fact neither book is able to raise that burden without a perceptible quiver or two.

To take *Forster's Other Kingdom* first. Mr Godfrey's thesis is announced in this sentence from his first paragraph: 'It is one thing to say, as many critics do, and quite correctly, that the novels of E. M. Forster abound in spiritual implications, that they are fundamentally concerned with the relation between the seen and unseen worlds, it is quite another however to take that relationship seriously, to accept as a fact rather than a hypothesis the reality of the spiritual world in terms of which the visible everyday world is being presented to us.' Taking the relationship between seen and unseen 'seriously' is here improperly identified with accepting the reality of the spiritual world 'as a fact'. Forster himself clearly takes the relationship very seriously indeed, but he draws back from any assertion of the fact which provides Mr Godfrey with the new perspective from which he writes his book. The consequent contrast between the commentator's confidence and his author's tentativeness remains disturbingly present throughout.

Mr Kirschner's statement of his thesis is scarcely less disturbing. He writes on his first page that he proposes 'to regard Conrad as a great psychologist' and 'to approach his work as the deliberate expression, in art, of his ideas about human nature'. Fortunately Conrad's fiction is not in fact used simply to provide evidence for some peculiarly Conradian theory of the human mind. Psycho-analytical approaches to Conrad are indeed entirely rejected. What we find is an examination of the novels and tales in terms of the idea of the self that they suggest. Whether such an examination, which could be conducted in

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0028428900063058 Published online by Cambridge University Press