

(p. 125) about Greek *pallikaria* ("heroes or thugs, according to taste") is particularly telling.

Among the most impressive sentences is one (p. 168) which holds the key to this book: "Every experience of the 1820s was repeated (in the other War 120 years later) including torture, betrayal and attempted murder, but also including loyalty, generosity and heroic self-sacrifice." Well fitted for his task, Woodhouse fulfils it brilliantly.

Queen Mary College,  
University of London

REX WITT

Constantine Cavarnos, *Modern Greek Thought. Three Essays dealing with philosophy, critique of science, and views of Man's nature and destiny*. Institute for Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies, Belmont, Massachusetts 1969. Pp. VI+115.

The author of this useful little book is already well known for his other works on kindred topics including an admirable monograph on Mount Athos (*Anchored in God*, 1959). He is well qualified to write about Modern Greek Thought.

To deal with the topics specified in the book's sub-title when the text covers less than a hundred pages raises the problem of adequately covering the subject in depth. The author must be congratulated on having it resolved by careful selection and citation. His prospective readers are "all persons who are interested in modern Greek civilization." Those of us who live in countries where the culture of Greek antiquity has left its own indelible mark and whose language is English will eagerly turn to this *opusculum* if we "are concerned with the human situation and the perennial vital questions." For us it is *multum in parvo*. It takes us right away from long-haired hippies and sex to the Byzantine world ("Modern Greek philosophy can best be understood as a continuation of Byzantine philosophy in modern times") and to the world of the monks of Mount Athos. We are helped in our reading. The seven pages of notes are succinctly gathered together (pp. 87-93). Thirteen pages of bibliography (95-12) precede an index of personal names (inevitably topics are missing from it). Somewhat regrettably titles are printed always in Roman letters and not in Greek. Obviously the author means to help his reader.

The claim that a gap has now been filled by Cavarnos's slender

volume ("no comprehensive interpretative work has been written") is justified. At the same time we must regard this as no more than a beginning. The nine characteristics of Modern Greek philosophy enumerated on p. 12 might well give rise to another work—or even nine different volumes. We must be struck with Cavarnos' insistence that thinkers in the Greece of our day are concerned to emphasize the "Christian Hellenic tradition." Their attitude resembles such ancient writers' approach to classical Greek philosophy as Clement of Alexandria and Eusebius (the former mentioned on p. 23, the latter not). Philosophers in Western Europe who have felt the influence of scholastic Thomism or who have responded to Eastern thought may wonder whether the independent spirit in modern Greek thought (pp. 28-32) reflects a narrowness of outlook. Perhaps we should remind ourselves that one who centuries ago resuscitated Platonism, the Egyptian-born Plotinus, is said to have planned to go to the East to pick up its philosophy.

Is Modern Greek philosophy too much tied to the Orthodox Church? Cavarnos, as a member of this Church, would answer no. But to the present Protestant reviewer, sympathetic as he is to the Orthodox standpoint, the philosophic rigidity, the strength and the weakness, can be accounted for largely on that ground. Certainly whereas some of our Western theological thinkers shilly-shally and like the former Bishop of Woolwich put God "out there," the typical philosophers of Modern Greece know just where they stand in this world, and in the next. Makrakis held that "every judgment opposed to the testimony of the Scriptures is false, whereas that which accords with it is true." Cavarnos quotes the example given by Makrakis of a false judgment "There is no devil" (p. 25). Few Western interpreters of modern thought would end a book (p. 84) with a section on the resurrection of the body.

Rightly Cavarnos stresses (p. 18) that the Idealism characteristic of modern Greek philosophy is derived from Byzantium. Just as the *philosophia perennis* of the Greeks today elevates itself above science, rejecting positivism and naturalism, so does Christian doctrine above philosophy. (Here, however, Cavarnos cites as exceptions two non-materialistic thinkers, Kairis and Makrakis: p. 23). The interesting attempts made (as though unconsciously in the wake of Plotinus) by such men as Galanos, Typaldos and Kontoglou to assimilate the Greek tradition with that of the Far East are to be deemed no better than the Hegelian ideas of Gratsiatos (pp. 29-35). Cavarnos' own attitude is summed up (p. 38) in the remark that the philosophers of modern

Greece "have shown themselves... to be the peers of their ancient and medieval or Byzantine predecessors."

The examples of episcopal scientists provided by Voulgaris (well treated: cf. the page references in the Index) and Theotokis (p. 40) may remind some readers of the English Bishop Berkeley. The combination of a zealous interest in physical science and absolute need of religious faith (p. 40) is not unknown in the Western world. Men like Newton could remain brilliant scientists and devout Christians and Protestantism itself offers any number of fundamentalist scientists.

In the light of the detailed survey of what Greece has achieved philosophy-wise in modern times we may wonder whether she will one day produce someone of the same calibre as Bergson or Whitehead or Croce. Cavarnos is obviously not much interested in questions of this kind.

The reviewer is glad to note what is stated about Tsirintanis' important book 'Towards a Christian Civilization' (pp. 50-52). This deserves to be better known than it appears to be in Western Europe and America. The often woolly thinking of those who profess themselves "social scientists" in the West might be corrected if they took a leaf or two out of the writings of this gifted Professor of Jurisprudence.

Cavarnos, not surprisingly, is well-read in his own national literature. He effectively cites such poets as Cavafi, Kalvos, Solomos, Palamas and Sikelianos, and knows his Korais and Myrivilis. He might well have mentioned the Behaviourism of Watson (p. 82 ad fin.) when he quotes (at some length) the passage in which Nectarios exclaims "No, the soul is not matter, is not a secretion of the brain." After all, Cavarnos is now in America.

A few small points may be added. Is it not risky to appeal (as Kontoglou does, p. 52) to the New Testament "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation" in support of the doctrine that the physical sciences "have no relationship to the knowledge of God"? the hard and fast division of science and religion into watertight compartments (p. 56) may well lead devout minds to a state of despair such as Tennyson voiced in his well-known "In Memoriam." The section entitled "The Heart" (pp. 70-72) is almost Egyptian in character. The concept of an intuitive logos (p. 65) is a fruitful one. A pity perhaps that the term logos did not arise in the vocabulary of north-western Europe. Kalvos is of course a good poet—but is he really a *great* lyrical poet (p. 67)? Cavarnos mentions Kazantzakis more than once and suggests (p. 68) that his *Weltanschauung* is "essentially unrelated to the Hellenic tradition." It would not

be hard, however, to find in ancient literature (not necessarily of the philosophers) examples of men whose outlook and spiritual temper resembled that of the gifted modern imitator of Homer. Lucian might perhaps do.

It is to be hoped that before long Cavarnos will produce a bigger treatise on the same subject. In the meantime his little guide will be found very useful, very readable and in some ways somewhat provocative.

Queen Mary College,  
University of London.

REX WITT

Pandelis Prevelakis, *Tà Ποιήματα* [The Poems] (1933-45). Athens, 1969. Pp. 184.

In his theatrical works, but primarily in his novels (see *The Sun of Death*, Simon and Schuster, 1964), Pandelis Prevelakis has written with epic sweep and tragic depth of death and resurrection in his native island of Crete, of the growth to maturity of the creative temperament as it struggles with ideologies and craft. But poetry has always been for Prevelakis sudden explosions of inspiration during long periods of silence, "like a burning thread which now and then flashes with fire". He has repudiated his first book of early verse, *Soldiers* (1928), and in this volume has gathered his only other books of poetry, *The Nude Poetry* (1939) and *The Nudest Poetry* (1941), together with an unpublished poem, "Hours on a Greek Island" (1945).

Poetry, for Prevelakis, was the lyrical ecstasy of his youth. Although he wrote masterfully in metrics, most of his poems were written in free verse, for he felt that any technical form or construction of artifice would falsify and distort the sincerity, the clarity, the impetuous onrush of true inspiration which the poet must channel as though he were moulding fire in his hands and not chiseling into shape an objective block of marble. He wished instinctive wisdom and inspiration to take the place of professional consciousness and skill. Love and the heat of poetic energy would find the necessary inner expression and place a word with absolute confidence, make a sentence pulsate with the appropriate rhythm, and leave the verse free, unguarded, and bare. In short, he wished to write a "nude poetry", a phrase he took from a poem by Jiménez. Simplicity with passion, integrity with clarity, a flaming nakedness of spirit, "the sincerity of the innate word", in which every word