for being implied only. Professor Gluckman's account of Barotse law is not over given to theoretical statements about primitive law: from his presentation of the facts a better understanding is derived which in turn enriches future accounts and analyses of other societies. There have in fact been remarkable changes and developments in English social anthropology over the last twenty-five years and they are advances in understanding and in ability to communicate. They are advances in theory if it is appreciated that for the social anthropologist theory and the refinement of theory is implicit in the very handling of his facts.

The book closes with a chapter which would have us look forward to a new world where anthropologists will sit in the councils of the nations to advise on folk-ways. I should prefer to think that if social anthropology can set itself any such moral end, that end is an educated world in which such fantasies of science fiction are not necessary.

For the rest, *Ape to Angel* is written in flat prose with a tendency to racy cliché, but it is gaily presented and well illustrated.

DAVID POCOCK

THE CONSECRATED URN. By Bernard Blackstone. (Longmans; 45s.)

Mr Blackstone's book is an ambitious one; it sets out to examine the ideas of growth and form as they manifested themselves in Keats's poems. 'Keats's poetry', he says, 'presents a constant pattern: the urn, the artefact, standing in the midst of a floral context.' For Mr Blackstone, the most illuminating approach to the poems is that which sees '*the power of the urn—form—spreading outwards into the processes of nature—growth*'. He has admirably eschewed both the school of criticism which regards Keats's poems as merely a gifted deployment of sensuous imagery, and also that which views Keats as an unfulfilled poet who died before emotion had made any real contact with ideas in his verse. Mr Blackstone is primarily concerned with showing the development and complexity of Keats's philosophy—a philosophy which sprang *from* the poems themselves rather than plodded alongside them. As a jumping-off ground, Erasmus Darwin, another doctor-poet, is compared with Keats, but the comparison is made to indicate the differences between the two poets rather than the similarities. For Darwin, poetry was based on reason and subject to reason; it was neither a deep and hidden source of power in the poet's imagination nor a way of knowledge which transcended man's rational faculty. Darwin's beliefs were, therefore, at odds with those of Romantic poets such as Coleridge and Keats himself. It was for the Romantics to find again 'the true voice of feeling' and to recover the sense of 'the shaping spirit of imagination'. The purpose of Mr Blackstone's book is to present poetry as 'the expression of reality superior . . . to the

myth'. Where Darwin sought systems, Keats observed nature and men; Keats *searched* for order (a search which took him into many dark places), he did not try to impose it.

This desire for truth and reality led him to exalt 'negative capability', that state which Mr Blackstone describes as when 'the mind is not wary but aware dips without prejudice into the total process as it flows, submits itself to a pattern which may or may not reveal itself'. This attitude was something very different from vacuous passivity; it demanded a difficult self-surrender and an attentiveness before the object. In Keats's *Letters* we find this cast of mind explained and vindicated. Like so many poets, he felt himself to be a chameleon, fluctuating from one mood to another, constantly in a state of becoming rather than being. In a letter which he wrote to his brother George in 1818, he said, 'Some think me middling, others silly, others foolish—everyone thinks he sees my weak side against my will, when in truth it is with my will—I am content to be thought all this because I have in my own breast so great a resource'. Keats's strength lay in his complete awareness of his own apparent lack of steadfastness. He knew that beneath all the varying moods, emotions and ideas, his own identity lay unassailed and, indeed, invulnerable.

Mr Blackstone gives a useful and scholarly account of the influence of the Neo-Platonists and Hermetic philosophers on Keats's thought, but he is at his best, I think, when, untrammelled by annotations and influences, he is examining the poems themselves. He is particularly illuminating on *Endymion* and *Hyperion*. Of the mature insight manifested in the following lines from *Endymion*,

> '. . . a grievous feud
> Hath led thee to this Cave of Quietude',

Mr Blackstone writes, 'He has come, at twenty-three, to an understanding which few men reach at twice those years. He has tasted the quality of the peace that passes all understanding, the peace which lies in full acceptance of *what is*.' Such insight necessitated great suffering and there were few kinds of pain and affliction which Keats was not familiar with. To have a glimpse of peace does not mean that one can automatically sustain a sense of peace in one's own life. He was soon to learn not only the two sorts of anguish most calculated to wound a poet fatally—unreciprocated love and almost complete public hostility to his poetry—but also the pain which is inseparable from artistic effort itself—the arduous search for a language which will not contaminate the vision, the appropriation of images which will enhance not distort reality. Through his own personal griefs and sickness and through his unceasing struggle to unite the abstracting and sensuous powers of his

imagination, Keats, before he died, arrived at a stage where he understood by affinity, 'the agony, the strife of human hearts'. Of the heart-broken letters to Fanny Brawne, Mr Blackstone says, 'we watch passion warping a sensibility'. 'Warp' is, I think, the wrong word. Keats was scarred by his experiences, certainly, but he was not warped or twisted permanently. If he had been, he could never have achieved that joyful union of growth and form, movement and stillness, excitement and peace, which we find in the great Odes.

Mr Blackstone sees the Odes as 'a poetry of impermanence, of growth and flowering and decay, before it is a poetry of form. And when it is a poetry of form, the form is Platonic: it exists above the circle of courses. Keats moves through impermanence to permanence.' This is perceptive criticism and provides the only sensible explanation of such lofty abstract statements as 'Beauty is Truth, Truth Beauty'. It was the Platonic cast of Keats's mind which enabled him to reconcile the apparent contraries in the universe and in human experience. It is interesting, then, to note that when Mr Blackstone examines the working of the creative faculty in Keats, he uses a language that is almost Thomist—'Power resides in the correct exercise of the functions proper to each being at each particular stage of his growth'. The triumph of Keats, a triumph which Mr Blackstone brilliantly demonstrates in this stimulating and learned book, is that he achieved, while still so young, a balance of genius and character which placed him among those rare men

'. . . to whom the miseries of the world
Are misery, and will not let them rest.'

ELIZABETH JENNINGS