

relevance to pastoral problems, its future until recently seemed to lie in producing increasingly competent but not very imaginative analyses of the demographic features of religion. As such it was clearly useful, but it had a limited amount to contribute to a genuine understanding of the religious life today.

The publication of Professor Carrier's book, however, introduced a new dimension into the discipline. In his synthesis of work in both the psychology and sociology of religion, the writer discusses the relevance of recent studies for the idea of membership of the Church. His emphasis upon the psychological aspects of belonging to a religious group, what it means for the individual, does much to overcome the superficiality of the general approach of religious sociology. Received enthusiastically on its publication several years ago, it has shown those working in the sphere of religion with a pastoral aim in view that the concepts and findings of the psychology of religion can be used to give meaning to religious statistics.

In addition to its significance for those engaged in socio-religious studies, this survey of investigations provides the general reader with a very good introduction to what has been done. (A more critical approach to some of the studies might also have shown the reader what has *not* been done.)

But while Professor Carrier's splendidly documented book can be thoroughly recommended, this particular edition provokes less warmth. Firstly, it seems that, with the

exception of the cover, the American edition has been entirely reproduced, the spelling remaining American. Secondly, the bibliography was a notable feature of the original edition; this appeared in 1960 and since then a great deal of relevant work has been published and invaluable international bibliography on the sociology of christianity, he is clearly more aware of these developments than most. Surely, then, the publisher could have been expected to ask the author to bring the bibliography up to date for this edition.

Finally, the translation cannot pass without comment. This book should serve as a very good introduction to some basic psychological and sociological approaches to religion. The clumsiness of sentences like 'This postulate of apostolic utility, we believe, will not have diverted our attention from valid observation' (p. 17), or headings like 'Religious Belonging at the Level of the Communal' (p. 38) can only repel the reader. It is true that some of the unpleasant hybrids which have resulted from the uneasy encounters between sociology and religion have been in use for some time and the blame cannot be laid at the translator's door (though they are usually hyphenated, which somehow insulates the reader a little from their jarring, a device rejected in this edition). But the style of the original volume calls for adaptation of a drastic kind for an English audience, and this is completely lacking in the present edition.

JOAN BROTHERS

PURITY AND DANGER by Mary Douglas. *Routledge and Kegan Paul*; 25s.

Dr Douglas is a reader in Social Anthropology at University College, London and in this book she seeks to understand the rules of purity in any society modern or primitive as the enemy of change, ambiguity and/or compromise. The nineteenth century saw in primitive religions two special points which separated them from the other great religions of the world, namely that they were supposed to be inspired by fear and confused with defilement and hygiene. The author will have none of this. Dirt offends against order. Eliminating it is not a negative movement, but a positive effort to organise the environment.

'We can recognise in our notions of dirt that we are using a kind of omnibus compendium which includes all the rejected elements of

ordered systems. It is a relative idea. Shoes are not dirty in themselves, but it is dirty to place them on the dining table; food is not dirty in itself, but it is dirty to leave cooking utensils in the bedroom, or food bespattered on clothing, similarly, bathroom equipment in the drawing room; clothing lying on chairs out-door things in-doors; upstairs things downstairs; under-clothing appearing where over-clothing should be, and so on. In short our pollution behaviour is the reaction which condemns any object or idea likely to confuse or contradict cherished classifications . . . or a particular set of assumptions by which experience is controlled.'

I hope the author will forgive me for quoting extensively this lucid paragraph and the last sentence out of context, but the highly impor-

tant ideas which she presents are frequently mutilated by a complicated and at times incomprehensible style of writing.

Her position is reached after an examination of ritual, magic and miracle, and a variety of social aspects of primitive communities. The anthropological data requires expert assessment beyond my capacity although her destructive criticism of previous workers particularly Frazer reads in places as the promised fulfillment of a personal vendetta. Her treatment of psychological theory is no less hostile, but since it is limited almost entirely to Freudian libido theory, little discussion is possible (when will social scientists note that besides Freud, there

were such people as Jung, Adler, the Neo-Freudians and the Behaviourists?)

Despite its limitations in style and approach this book is significant. By considering purity behaviour as an attempt to impose order on disorder, it shifts the significance of taboo, and prohibitions from the realm of immutable natural laws to a possibility of change and modification as comprehension of the disorder deepens and integration is possible. The importance of this for christianity and particularly roman catholicism with its hitherto rigid and inflexible approach, particularly in sexual matters is beyond doubt.

J. DOMINIAN

THE NATURE OF PSYCHOLOGY: A selection of Papers, Essays, and other Writings by Kenneth J. W. Craik. *C.U.P.*; 30/-.

To those who have studied psychology in British universities since the war, Craik has heretofore been known mainly for his short book called 'The Nature of Explanation', and as a name with which those of their teachers who knew him were wont to conjure. Killed in an accident in 1945 at the age of 31, and with his published works dating only from 1937, he can now be seen, in this collection of his posthumous papers, to merit the praises of his admirers and the deep regrets expressed over his death.

Craik's publications read more like entries in an encyclopaedia of psychology than the work of one man. He ranged during his eight years as an active research worker over the fields of retinal physiology, theories of measurement, philosophy of science, the design of the artificial cockpit for pilot training, and visual perception. Throughout the papers runs a hard core of precise, brilliant thought. And perhaps the most direct tribute to his genius is that to someone who, like the writer, studied psychology 10 years after Craik's death, many of the ideas which he put forward were ones we took for granted.

Apart from the specialised interest which the book will hold for psychologists, however, there is a second major contribution which it holds for any reader. It contains the draft chapters for a book which was to succeed 'The Nature

of Explanation', and which shows that Craik could have written the first formal text on what we now call cybernetics, at least with respect to its analysis of the brain. The chapters we have left of 'The Nature of Human Action', as the book was to be called, are clearer than any other account of the subject known to the reviewer. Moreover, although written before 1945 and unfinished, they can stand even now as an accurate formulation of the subject. Here, expressed with extreme clarity, are the ideas of purposeful machines; of the mechanistic models of learning by feedback; of artificial nerve cell nets to simulate behaviour. Of few people it can be said that their unfinished work is the best introduction to a field of thought which only developed after their death. And those who wish to understand the way in which these ideas impinge on the traditional ways of thought about mind, mechanism and the nature of man, will probably not find the position stated more clearly in any book of comparable price. As a bonus, some of the shorter pieces include what must rank among the best descriptions of a scientist's experience of the value of his work, and of life and beauty, that have been written in modern times.

This is a most remarkable collection of essays.

NEVILLE MORAY