

What is tackled by philosophers on the Continent is left to literary critics in the English-speaking world. This is not without grave disadvantages. For instance: Dr Steiner's decision to prefer the philosophy of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* to that of *Investigations* is never argued for; he contents himself with saying that 'it is an open question whether the *Tractatus* is not the more powerful and consistent statement. It is certainly deeply felt.' That does not seem a secure enough basis to hold up a whole interpretation of 'the retreat from the

word' in our culture: Wittgenstein, Jackson Pollock, John Cage, the 'new illiteracy', and so on. But there are some important things, if they are to be said at all, which have to be said badly; and one of the most important of these is how we are to state what is happening in our culture, particularly in terms of the opposition, if it really is one, between *Geist* and *Natur*. In the absence of more coherent attempts, for those who have ears to hear Dr Steiner and Fr Ong are among our most telling and provoking prophets.

FERGUS KERR, O.P.

**CREATIVE EVANGELISM**, by Harry Sawyerr. *Lutterworth, London, 1968. 183 pp. 37s. 6d.*

**MISSIONS AND RELIGIONS**, ed. Austin Flannery, O.P. *Sceptre Books, Dublin, 1968. 163 pp. 21s.*

Canon Sawyerr is Professor of Theology of Fourah Bay College, Sierra Leone. His exciting new book is sub-titled 'Towards a new Christian encounter with Africa'.

*Missions and Religions* prints the Vatican documents on Missionary Activity and the non-Christian Religions. Penetrating essays tracing the history of their discussion in the Council draw out their implications for the Church today. The volume ends with the Pope's Letter to Africa in October, 1967.

That Letter had spelled out again the areas in which the animistic background of the African should provide bridges towards the faith. It said (p. 137) 'the African who becomes a Christian does not disown himself, but takes up the age-old values of tradition in spirit and in truth', and (p. 145) 'today more than ever, the motive force of new Africa comes from its own sons, and in particular from (those) . . . in schools and universities'.

*Creative Evangelism* shows the truth of both these statements. It underlines how vital it is going to be that Christians engage together on the task of our generation 'to interpret the meaning of the non-Christian religions in the light of the universal history of salvation' (*Missions*, p. 43).

Canon Sawyerr surveys critically the interpretations of existence, evil and the universe with which he is best acquainted in West African societies. He points to the areas where sympathetic presentation of the Gospel as fulfilment will stand most chance of acceptance by the

non-Christian. He shows how at the points where the effort to do this has been least, the impact of the Gospel has been shallow. Above all (and here again our divisions as Christians stand condemned), he believes that Christianity is the expression of God's will for man's unity. Where it already transcends colour, tribe and clan divisions, it earns the right to be heard in these days when the secret of unity eludes so many newly-independent states.

Perhaps the most striking chapter in *Creative Evangelism* outlines 'a fresh liturgical approach'. Building on his understanding of priesthood as an Anglican, and on his traditions as an African, Sawyerr avers, 'only a sacerdotal ministry can meet the emotional and spiritual demands of the African if he is to feel at home in the Christian family. . . . Only a Christian priest can provide for the African convert to Christianity the complete release from anxiety, worry and depression which he formerly sought at the cultic shrines.' Bound up with all this is a frank study of ancestor beliefs, so that 'the communion of Saints' can come alive in African society.

Only as African theologians delve like this into the details of their two selves, and allow the Spirit to state quite simply where truth lies, can a new period of *deeply* creative evangelism happen in Africa. We have lived through the end of the 'missionary era', however long expatriates may or may not still be welcome to serve God's people there.

JOHN POULTON

**THOSE DUTCH CATHOLICS**, ed. by Michel van der Plas and Henk Suër. *Chapman, London, 1967. 164 pp. 21s.*

This book is concerned with dialogue. Desmond Fisher says in his Preface: 'I became convinced of the necessity of having it written when I

heard criticisms of the Dutch Church from some leading English prelates. I had just come from Holland where the atmosphere of genuine