

has to use language which presupposes precisely this quality. There is here a limit to what can be said, which has analogies to Wittgenstein's distinction in the *Tractatus* between what can be said and what 'shows itself' indirectly in what can be said. And it is this limit which, I think leads Merleau-Ponty to speak of the yearning for God and for eternity as 'hypocritical'. While Mr Novak seems to sense, at times, that there is a problem here, he does not attempt any clear answer to the challenge it offers to the believer.

Perhaps the most valuable contribution the book will make, in the context of Anglo-Saxon philosophy and of the contemporary western cultural climate, lies in its *tone*. Firstly, it is frankly personal – beginning, as it does, with a confession that atheism is, at times, an almost overwhelmingly attractive position, and that such events as one's brother's murder, or the problem of civil rights, or the manifest corrup-

tion of the church, are the kind of stimulus that the philosopher needs if he is to attain a wisdom which is also a basis for living. Secondly, there is the extreme tentativeness with which the philosophical position is held, and the understanding that the dividing lines today are not between intelligent atheism and intelligent christianity but rather between intelligence and stupidity themselves. Like Professor Cameron's *Night Battle*, Mr Novak's book is a refreshing manifestation of the new style of thinking that is coming from an academic catholic philosophy that has to live with intelligent atheism (and often with unintelligent christianity) and does not find it easy to secure a foothold anywhere, except in the honesty of the pursuit of understanding, and the belief that this pursuit, wherever it may lead, is the philosopher's task.

BRIAN WICKER

USES OF SOCIOLOGY. Edited by J. D. Halloran and Joan Brothers. *Sheed and Ward, 1966*; 12s.

Sociology is a discipline in which, until recently, there has been slight interest in this country, but which now enjoys considerable popularity. It is therefore timely that a collection of papers about sociology and the use of sociological analysis should be published for a lay readership. For those who would like to know what sociology is, James Halloran's introductory essay will be very useful, particularly on the negative side. Sociology is not, he says, social work, social reform, socialism, statistics or polling, or what is known in Ireland as 'normative sociology' – the study of papal encyclicals on 'the social question'. The positive definition is of course more difficult, but here too readers should find what Halloran has to say quite valuable. One cannot help feeling, however, that in introducing us to the subject matter and basic concepts of sociology, he relies too much on the schemata of certain American sociologists. He also (p. 4) shares Professor D. G. MacRae's enthusiasm for the 'body of interconnected work of social research, professional criticism and shared theoretical postulates' which has grown up in America in the last ten to fifteen years. Now it is among those involved in this work that we find most of the sociologists who, to use Halloran's words, 'appear not to be concerned with, and at times even to glory in, their failure to communicate outside their own elitist cliques' (p. 15). And it is this body

of work which, in contrast to, say, marxist sociology, often seems peculiarly irrelevant to actual human concerns. Hugh MacDiarmid once wrote that 'Poetry like politics maun cut/The cackle and pursue real ends', and one feels that this applies *a fortiori* to sociology, where the cackle is much louder and real ends tend to get lost in a fog of warnings against 'value-loading'. Halloran's treatment of this problem, although quite balanced and a lot better than much that has been written on this subject, seems to me less than satisfactory. The christian must surely *start* from a position of full commitment, and aim at a social theory which illuminates problems of practice. We must go much beyond the state in which 'there are at least some bridges between (sociological enquiry) and larger human hopes and purposes', to a full integration of theory and practice; unlike Halloran, I cannot see that there is any room for differences on this point.

Halloran sees this problem largely in terms of the relevance of existing sociology to social problems. Joan Brothers goes further than this and in an important paper on 'Sociology and Religion' sees a much deeper relation between sociology and christianity. She argues for synthesis, not just one-way application. She warns that 'just as in the nineteenth century the churches were slow to synthesise growing scientific knowledge with theological thought,

so now we are in danger of not developing our increasing knowledge of how social groups work in relation to a theological approach to the people of God' (p. 85). She points out that our growing realisation of the theological significance of the community has implications for sociology. 'It is only through *human* reality that man can reach God as Christ reached the Father for us all.' And so, 'To study and understand human communities, we cannot confine ourselves to the analysis of the way they work, the functions they fulfil in society. We must also consider their ends and purposes . . .' (p. 88). This is a very valuable plea for a reinstatement of the theological dimension, indeed of the theological basis, of our social thought. It means that 'Sociology . . . must look to the moral philosopher and the theologian for concepts and ideas concerning human values' (and, of course, human *action*, which is the stuff of history). This argument needs to be developed further than Miss Brothers actually takes it in her article, for the reorientation of sociological thought which it implies will be far-reaching in its effects. It must surely mean the restoration of historical perspective in sociology, and the end, among christians, of the false ahistoricism which has been quite popular among sociologists. It may mean a greater interest in marxist sociology, as we have begun to see the relevance to theology of marxist notions of man's history and activity. It must mean a radical reappraisal of sociological concepts of 'community' in a theological light, and some hard thought about the concept of 'religion' in the light of marx's critique of religion which seems now to make considerable theological sense (*cf.* the recent discussion by Adrian Cunningham in *Slant*). These and other explorations are urgently needed.

A meaningful sociology must therefore be grounded in a radical theology. But current sociological work is also relevant to christian concerns. Two good articles in this book deal with the sociologies of education and of crime,

and deserve to be widely read. (Although one would be happier about that on education, by M. B. Gaine, if the author had clarified the concepts of 'class' which play an important part in his discussion.) A third, on 'The structure and organisation of the Catholic Church in England', is an extremely competent treatment by A. E. C. W. Spencer of the church as an institution, a hierarchical structure of normatively-defined roles. Mr Spencer argues that there is a growing disjunction between the normative definition of the roles of many members of the church and their perception of them. Through their membership of other institutions and through knowledge of the acts of the Council and of foreign bishops, British catholics are adopting a more participative philosophy, and this will make the existing authoritarian structure of the church increasingly difficult to work in the future. This structure is also inadequate because of developments in British society since the Industrial Revolution, to which it has not been adapted. Mr Spencer outlines a more participative structure in the light of modern organisational theory, and shows how this should work better than the existing one. His analysis is entirely convincing, but it is as well to realise its limited value. It does not take account of any dramatic change in the relationship of church and world. The church organised as Mr Spencer would have it would do the kind of things the church tries to do at the moment much more effectively. But if the church is to have a more radical role – if christians are to become social revolutionaries, as *New Blackfriars* among others has sometimes suggested they should – there must be all kinds of changes in church structure, to correspond to the changes in the functions of the church, such as we can only begin to envisage. In this case, Mr. Spencer's proposals, although still useful, may prove not radical enough.

MARTIN SHAW

THE SOCIOLOGY OF RELIGIOUS BELONGING by Hervé Carrier. *Darton, Longman and Todd*; 30s.

One of the basic weaknesses of the prolific discipline of religious sociology has been its reliance upon analyses of religious statistics, describing only the demographic characteristics of an area or group and failing to grasp the underlying social and personal realities which give these meaning. Many professional

sociologists have tended to assume that this movement, originally Catholic but now extended to other churches throughout Europe and increasingly elsewhere, is incapable of rising above the level of superficial descriptions of religious observance and the like. Hampered often by its clients' insistence upon immediate