

South Africa's external affairs are discussed with great insight, and in view of the present talk of a South African Republic it is interesting to read that though there exists in South Africa a vigorous and growing feeling of national independence and pride, for the majority of South Africans this is not an anti-British sentiment. True, only a very small section of European South Africans have an emotional attachment to England, but the majority accept the fact that cordial relations with Britain and the Commonwealth are both natural and desirable.

Other chapters deal with South African government, administration, education, religion, and, finally, there is a postscript on South Africa's present constitutional difficulty. Undoubtedly this work should contribute in no small way towards a greater understanding of, and sympathy with, South Africa's many problems.

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RELIGION AND SOCIETY AMONG THE COORGS OF SOUTH INDIA. By M. N. Srinivas. (Clarendon Press; 30s.)

Professor Srinivas's theme is the way in which Coorg religion supports Coorg solidarity—solidarity within the *okka*, or patrilineal joint family, solidarity within the village, and solidarity with the rest of India. He shows this in each case by an analysis of the 'ritual idiom' of Coorgs rather than of their explicitly held beliefs. 'In any system of ritual each ritual action has its meaning, and the totality of such meanings constitutes the idiom of that system' (p. vi, from Professor Radcliffe-Brown's Foreword). Such a conception of ritual is potentially ambiguous; the *meaning* of a ritual complex, it is supposed, is to be discovered less in the intention of the performer than by a comparison of the elements in that complex with elements in parallel complexes. Consequently, what would ordinarily be called *ceremonial* action not engaging divine sanctions, is approximated to *ritual*, and the distinction between secular and religious actions is obscured. That such a distinction is to be found in Coorg culture may be seen from Professor Srinivas's own account. There is a difference between an ordinary bath and a 'ritual' bath (in Professor Srinivas's usage); but there is also a distinction between the effects of a 'ritual' bath: 'bathing in a sacred river is not only purifying in a ritual sense, but also removes the sins of the bather'. (p. 84.) This passing reference shows that such merely ceremonial actions as those of *sammanda*, the 'jural' part of the marriage ceremonies, are not simply continuous with properly ritual actions like the *mangala* part of the same ceremonies, and are therefore improperly called *ritual*: the uniqueness of the support given by religion to Coorg solidarity is obscured by a preoccupation with a functional meaning assigned to religion itself.

It is difficult to see just what intelligibility is offered by social studies functionalist in this deliberately 'objective' (p. v) sense.

The assumption appears to be that a society is more than a unity of relation—*multitudo*—and that consequently it may be understood in terms of such concepts as *solidarity*, interpreted not in a moral sense but naturalistically: a sort of gravitational attraction. On the contrary, it may be urged (with some support, perhaps, from Professor Evans-Pritchard's recent lectures on *Social Anthropology*) that the intelligibility of any society is realised primarily in the moral experience of the individual members of the society and of the anthropological investigator: that the metaphysical basis of anthropology is the possibility of *communication* between investigator and investigated as moral beings. Professor Srinivas offers a coherent and technically admirable account of Coorg society; but one wonders whether any educated Coorg who might read the book would recognise his own experience there. C.E.

MAGIE DES EXTRÊMES: Les Etudes Carmélitaines. (Bruges; Desclée de Brouwer; 105 frs.)

In the minds of the tireless and prolific editors of *Les Etudes Carmélitaines*, the 'Magic of Extremes' labels a remarkable variety of goods and evils—more comprehensive even than the 'Enthusiasm' of Mgr Knox. Even an article (and very good it is) on 'The Certainty of the Assumption' finds a place, on the dubious pretext that, 'cette "magie des extrêmes", le Pape Pie XII lui-même n'y pas échappé.' The alcoholics, existentialists, drug-addicts, psycho-analysts, theosophists, jazz-fiends and painters with a 'besoin de paroxysme' who, we learn, are likewise victims of this sorcery, may be surprised, but little comforted, to find themselves in the company of a Pope speaking *ex cathedra*.

There is plenty of sense in Georges Buraud's 'Les Magies de l'ésotérisme nouveau'—but he is too sweeping and unconstructive altogether. Sound, but inadequate, is André Derumaux's brief essay on 'The religious Deviations of the Taste for Excess'. Then we settle down to sober and engaging factual studies on mysticism in ancient Egypt and modern India. There follows the inevitable 'Mystique hindoue, mystique chrétienne', for the comfort and reassurance of the baffled and deflated Christian ego. Though enlivened, but also fogged, by amiable conversations between the Carmelite author and a swami of the Ramakrishna Mission, the examination of Yoga is conducted on conventional lines, 'toute grâce surnaturelle étant par hypothèse écartée'. Until this *hypothèse* (and perhaps its rational or emotional motivation) has been questioned, analysed and criticised, little progress is to be expected in this inquiry.

Interleaved are 'paroxysmic' reproductions and pronouncements from Picabia, Dali, Georges Mathieu and Henri Michaux. Salvador Dali, fresh from 'paroxysms' of nuclear bombardments and 'une rage de précision' offers a second pronouncement before plunging himself in isolation in Spain, 'l'Esprit-Saint et l'ascé-