

social situation to express and articulate meaning' (p. 37). The sense of the term 'symbolic' has been taken from S. Langer. The Langer quotation which the author uses to illustrate his intended meaning also defines 'gesture' as the action with symbolic or denoted significance. The author's definition can be reduced therefore to something like the following: 'ritual is bodily movement which denotes a feeling', granted that 'denoted' is used with S. Langer to refer to expressive acts performed without inner momentary compulsion. If this reduction is accepted the original definition is shown to be too rotund. And such a lack of parsimony in the definition shows how far sociology in particular has to go in order to establish the intellectual preconditions for a theory of ritual which breaks with existing prejudices and also makes a real move forward. Further, the author's definition is abstract in its solution to the nature of ritual. His definition comes to resolve the body-mind split. For the rational utilitarian mind acts without emotion whereas in contrast the expression of emotion can be over-spontaneous. Ritual is the product of neither the rational mind nor the spontaneous body if these two are taken in separation. Rather, it is the disciplined emotional expression of the whole person (cf. pp. 37-43). Useful as this attempt at a definition may be in the context of the current basic attitudes to ritual, the author is still accepting the body-mind dichotomy to set the problem and then proposing a neat conceptual solution. The breakthrough must come from a more concretely felt empirical problem—perhaps that of the body in relation to the structuring of human time.

The greater part of the book is in fact taken up with accounts and references to instances of ritual. The author sees 'concrete rituals' as composed of at least one of four 'analytical types'

of ritual action. These four are religious, civic life-cycle and aesthetic (cf. p. 48). This typology rests on 'the nature of the experience in the different types of ritual' (p. 53), here illustrated principally through High Anglican rituals. There is a photographic emphasis on dance in the chapter on aesthetic ritual, and a final chapter on ritual, social change and the counter-culture. But so many themes are indexed that the concrete analysis of individual instances must necessarily be perfunctory. Primarily the book serves as a general introduction to an expanded conceptualisation of ritual.

The author sees religious ritual action as concerned with worship and denoting the numinous. So he seems to imply that recent liturgical changes have entailed a move from religious ritual to civic ritual in which the group is the focus of concern (cf. p. 74). This may not be so. What about the age-old solidary functions of church-going for Irish and Polish nationals, for example? The major question which such an analysis and the general typology brings to mind is of a different order, however, and it concerns the underlying model of man in which denotative bodily movement is of four kinds and the religious is equivalent to the numinous. This is not so much a criticism of the author as of the sociological tradition in general, which has been insufficiently reflexive in its own assumptions in defining ritual. It is to the author's credit that he is at least sufficiently free himself to provoke questions which have more relevance to those seriously concerned about the re-creation of liturgy than the old cry that ritual is both irrational and outdated. Perhaps his next book might be more helpful in answering such questions. In preparation read this one.

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CYPRIAN OF CARTHAGE AND THE UNITY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH, by Peter Hinchliff. *Geoffrey Chapman*, London, 1974. 154 pp. £3.75.

'The story of Cyprian's life is the story of how the cold disciplinarian became the hero of Christian Carthage'. So ends the first chapter, after a racy journalistic recreation of the night after Cyprian's execution in 258. But do not be discouraged. Peter Hinchliff's book is, in fact, a most interesting and fruitful account of Cyprian's ten years as bishop, and the evolution of his theological opinions in the course of his attempts to cope with successive crises in the church, brought on by persecution from without and dissension within.

Cyprian's writings are in the main concerned with questions of discipline: What should one do with the presbyter who kicks his wife in the

stomach to make her miscarry and leaves his father to starve to death in the street? Under what condition should people who lapsed during the persecution be readmitted to the church? Are heretical baptisms valid? These may not seem to be passionately interesting issues but they all relate to the fundamental question as to the identity of the church. What sort of community does she claim to be? Hinchliff's exposition of the evolution of Cyprian's thought on this question helps one to understand how it was that the suspect sect of the late Second Century could become, only a few years after the death of Cyprian, the church of Constantine.

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