

—to 'the concrete person in a concrete context'—thus dissipates the anxiety and embarrassment that any reasonable Catholic must always have felt at this solemn pronouncement of Vatican I. The point (which Lonergan makes here in a paper given in 1968) was made in the apologetics course which I attended in 1959-60, and it is perhaps neither impertinent nor irrelevant to record that: Rugeley was a better place than Rome to be doing theology in then.

That the stress on objective truth at the expense of subjectivity should be yielding to a new sense of the 'I' in theological reflection must of course prove beneficial. On the other hand, at least on the evidence of these essays, it is always 'the rationally reflecting subject', 'the responsibly deliberating subject', whom Lonergan invokes (page 73). When that 'I' is examined in the

light of the discoveries of Marx and Freud, however, will it then seem so straightforward to take it as the starting-point?

When he was very young Lonergan once asked an older colleague in the Society how one reconciled obedience and initiative as a Jesuit, and the reply he received was: 'Go ahead and do it. If superiors do not stop you, that is obedience. If they do stop you, stop and that is obedience' (page 266). He has done far more than his share of hack lecturing (classes of 650 at the Gregorianum!), but perhaps there was no stopping him from breaking through what he inherited to a new age in Catholic theology. These essays testify to a reconciliation of theological initiative and faithful obedience which will stand as a model and a monument.

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PSYCHOLOGY AND COMMON SENSE, by R. B. Joynson. *Routledge and Kegan Paul*, London, 1974. 112 pp. £2.50.

Because this book appeals to the man of 'ordinary good sense', and advances the thesis that he knows a good deal more about people than the professional psychologist, it will bring comfort to the suspicious layman. He will learn that he need no longer feel apprehensive in the face of psychological expertise because the experts live in cloud cuckoo land and certainly do not know what he is thinking. There are also professional psychologists and students of psychology who have been bored to tears over the years by the narrow and often sterile tenets of Behaviourism: they will find the send-up of the 'pseudo-scientists' very satisfactory. Others will enjoy the book for the vigour of its style even if they don't agree with a word of it.

The argument which Dr Joynson puts forward is, roughly, that for the past fifty years academic psychologists have wasted untold time, energy and money trying to establish Behaviourism as a hard science; and that even now, when they have belatedly come to their senses and begun to re-introduce mental concepts into psychology, they refuse to confess their sins but instead tie themselves into mental knots trying to pretend that 'experience' is really a sort of behaviour. He suggests that psychology has established no laws, discovered no facts and can make no useful predictions about what any-

one will do next: that, in short, psychologists know no more about the human condition than any sensible, educated and experienced person. The attack on Behaviourism is erudite, much of the criticism is well judged, but it is the controlled ferocity of the writing which gives the book its impact.

Such is the force with which the book is written that it takes a while for any doubts about the validity of the argument to penetrate the consciousness of the mesmerised reader; unfortunately, when the doubts do begin to suggest themselves, they are rather serious doubts. Dr Joynson in this appeal to commonsense has somehow forgotten how 'conventional wisdom' has been changed by psychological theory and practice. Just as most people alive today know that atoms can be split, so, inescapably, many of them know something about intelligence tests and unconscious motivation. There are no naive observers to whom one can appeal for a dispassionate assessment of the success of psychology. The conventional wisdom of Europe a hundred years ago would have been as outraged by the notion that heredity was irrelevant as the American conventional wisdom of today, fed by two generations of determined environmentalists, is outraged by the theories of Professor Jensen—in the face of this contrast it is difficult to maintain the

thesis that conventional wisdom can be meaningfully contrasted with psychological theory.

There is another problem with the argument put forward in this book; it seems to confuse science with technology. This is an understandable confusion because in psychology the distinction has not been made at all consistently. The importance of the distinction is that it is technology which changes our style of life, not science: science changes only our understanding of the world in which we live. Technology may depend upon science for its existence, but in practise it can easily happen that a theoretical physicist is less successful than a competent small boy when it comes to mending a faulty bicycle lamp—an observation which tells us exactly nothing about the truth or usefulness of physics. Equally the Behaviourist may be rotten at predicting behaviour outside his laboratory—not because his theory is faulty but because he lacks any real skill as an applied scientist. Behaviourism developed as an academic theory, tested and supported largely by laboratory experiments: it may be a bad theory but it has belatedly, largely thanks to the work of Skinner, developed a flourishing technology in the form of Behaviour Modification. Behaviour modification attempts, not to predict behaviour, but to change it by deliberately and systematically altering the reinforcement contingencies associated with a particular behaviour or group of behaviours. This technology has taken Behaviourism out of the laboratory into schools, homes, prisons, mental hospitals and, indeed, any and every context: Dr Joynson virtually ignores this tidal wave of applied Behaviourism which shows no sign of abating, whatever may be happening to the theory. The proper comparison

would be between the relative success of conventional wisdom and behavioural technology rather than Behaviourist theory: such a contrast is at no point made in this book. The predictions of the psychologist are necessarily rather like those of the weather forecaster: both make mistakes for the same reason, that their knowledge of antecedent events is incomplete, not that their understanding of the processes involved is necessarily faulty.

There is another theoretical issue upon which it might be useful to comment. Dr Joynson makes a good deal of the fact that the exclusion of mental events and experience from psychology is inherently ridiculous—an outrage to common sense. This may be so, but it is generally held among philosophers of science that a postulate in a scientific theory may legitimately be ridiculous provided it is consistent with the other postulates in the theory. Many of the postulates of Biology and Physics are quite as ridiculous as the postulates of Behaviourism: in this context appeals to common sense are apt to be unfortunate: after all, it remains perfectly obvious that the sun still rises even for those who 'know' that it does not move. Science may be said to have advanced by repeatedly refusing to accept the obvious and, obdurately denying the evidence of our senses, embracing the absurd.

I was disconcerted to find that the book had left me, after some furious re-thinking, more, rather than less, favourably inclined towards Behaviourism than before I read it. It is the capacity to provoke such hard thinking about the assumptions which underlie contemporary psychology that make this book well worth reading, even if it fails to convince or convert.

MONICA LAWLOR

NORTHERN IRELAND: CAPTIVE OF HISTORY. Money, religion and politics from the Boyne to Bloody Sunday, by Gary MacEoin. *Holt, Rinehart and Winston*, New York, Chicago and San Francisco, 1974. 338 pp. \$10.

THE GUINEAPIGS, by John McGuffin. *Penguin Books*, Harmondsworth, 1974. 188 pp. 40p.

Books on Ireland proliferate; over 100 titles, mainly non-fiction, have been published in English since violence broke out in 1969. But there is a paradox in this exposure of the 'troubles' in the printed word. It is still

commonplace to be asked outside Ireland, by people who read books: 'What is it really all about?'. English people, especially, confide in a profound ignorance of all but the most obvious features of the conflict on their neigh-