what we in fact have is a common human belief in psychic power expressing itself in many diverse forms in different societies. This raises the further interesting question whether – if the material were only available in sufficient detail — it might be found that European witchcraft beliefs were not so uniform as they are often made to appear. And the modern cults in England – they are not mentioned; but they give this book its popular appeal – are they witchcraft at all within the anthropological meaning?

What is perhaps most surprising is that Dr Parrinder should accept almost uncritically the dictum of Professor Evans-Pritchard: 'Witchcraft is an imaginary offence because it is impossible'. If today we can see much of our attribution of evil to others as projection of our own paranoid phantasies, that is not necessarily to exclude all evil from them. If self-confessed witches are often enough depressives, is that evidence that *all* their evil thoughts are ineffective in the external world? The schizogenic power of families, described by R. D. Laing in *Sanity, Madness and the Family* is extraordinarily reminiscent of stories of unconscious witchcraft. The only reason for rejecting extra-sensory perception and, *pari passu*, what is now dignified as *psycho-kinesis* is refusal to believe in them; and that, as Professor Broad said years ago about the rejection of miracles, is empirical nonsense.

We simply must be agnostic about the objective nature of witchcraft; and, because the act is one which by definition cannot be observed, perhaps the question is wholly intolerant of empirical investigation. What is much more necessary is to deal with the fundamental causes of the nightmares of which witchcraft is one standardized form. In his last chapter Dr Parrinder calls it a 'tragic illusion' and thinks that 'an enlightened religion, education, medicine, and better social and racial conditions, will help to reduce "man's inhumanity to man" '. But the evidence from East Africa is that years of government action and mission teaching have increased the incidence of witchraft belief; and Dr Parrinder has already seen (p. 202) that Nazi persecution of Jews and Ku Klux Klan (one should perhaps add, the Smethwick by-election) express the old belief in new forms. It is difficult to see any end except in a rather thoroughgoing conversion.

F. B. WELBOURN

THE FAITH OF THE COUNSELLORS, by Paul Halmos. *Constable, 30s.*

The 'Counsellors' whom Professor Halmos discusses in this book are social and psychiatric workers of different kinds, and the idea of giving these a general descriptive title points to the book's chief significance. This is a study, not of particular aspects of social work, but of its meaning and impact within a whole culture, of the ways it has altered our structures of feeling and value. The point is well made when the author comments that social/psychiatric work is reaching a stage where one of its main objects of study will have to be 'the impact of its own growth . . . on human behaviour'; it is this kind of self-reflection which Halmos is trying to begin, in writing a book on social work with a title reminiscent of a solemn and slightly dated theological study.

Examining the cultural significance of the counsellors involves exploring their impact on other cultural elements, particularly on politics. The title of the first chapter – 'The Discrediting of Political Solutions' — gives a clue to Halmos's position: he argues that counselling has taken over from politics, as a focus of human compassion and social change, because politics is crude, dull, impersonal, narrowing, and aesthetically distasteful. What is really narrowing is Halmos's definition of politics, as the clumsy, beaurocratic science of organisation: from this it's an obvious step to claim that 'So long as political action is aimed at organisation and institutional changes it will not catch up with the personal miseries of the individual'. Ideas of politics which try to make precisely that connection, between personal and social experience, lie outside the range of Halmos's descriptions: his position is the classically liberal belief that individual relationships are somehow more *real* than social involvements, as his more or less interchangeable use of 'private' and 'personal' reveals. The real focuses of concern are for him the 'private' and 'incalculably human' aspects of individual life; it is depressing to see from this that the welcome

attempt to place counselling within a whole culture conceals a new kind of dynamic individualism beneath its social commitment.

Because of this superficial attitude to politics, Professor Halmos misses some of the crucial questions which social work raises. How far is the real improvement it effects *in tension* with long-term radical change by virtue of conservative ideas of social adjustment and conformity, how far can it be a sop to a disturbed society, treating symptoms without reference to basic structural factors? How far, in fact, can counselling, carried on in isolation, become the reserve of humane concern in the margin of an inhuman society? This question itself raises issues which Halmos fails to treat: how far, in conceiving of 'The Counsellors' as a body, are we allowing the reality of common effort and responsibility to be undermined by the dangerous paternalism of a network of trained consolers? This is the danger implicit in the otherwise valuable main argument of the book – the argument that counselling involves certain human values and involvements on the part of the counsellors, which can become the basis of a general sense of human solidarity. It is good to point to these human values, against the pressures which would make counselling a dispassionate science, but the significance which this gives to the role of the counsellor can ironically backfire into the very kinds of paternalism which destroy human solidarity and fellowship.

Professor Halmos uses terms like 'love' and 'faith' to describe the attitudes which real counselling involves, and argues for the *dialectical* nature of the counsellor-patient relationship, one involving a whole personal understanding and sympathy. It is surprising that his only developed comment on the work of the psychiatrist who has argued this case more than anyone – R. D. Laing – is grudging and ungenerous. To mention Laing's work is to suggest another criticism of Halmos, the fact that his tone and general approach suggests an originality of argument which isn't really there. Laing, amongst others, has argued for a dialectical rationality in psychiatry, and although in one sense the case cannot be stated too often, Halmos is in danger at times of stating the obvious in an inflated way: a chapter-heading like 'The Coming of the Counsellors', with its suggestion of C. S. Lewis-type science fiction, is an example. But the general argument is still vital, and the fact that a Professor of Sociology can look at his subject in the kind of deep and wide perspective shown here probably outweighs the fact that a Professor of Sociology can see politics as concerned merely with the 'abstract logistics' of society.

TERRY EAGLETON

SACRED AND SECULAR, by A. M. Ramsey. *Longmans, 15s.*

While it is a pleasure to read an archbishop whose words are not the immediate object of ridicule, I find these Holland Lectures surprisingly lacking in impact. This is not because the arguments and views are blurred. Indeed we are clearly reminded of the essential Christian paradox that man's relationship to God is both beyond the world and within it, both sacred *and* secular, and that neither aspect can be reduced to the other. The sacred or other worldly aspect is realised in contemplative prayer. Traditional mysticism shows it to be a 'conscious relationship to God' which is so within the self that it is beyond words and images, beyond the world, history and nature. From such otherworldy experience flows a practical caring for fellow men; a caring distinctively Christian by including a regard for man's otherworldy destiny. The paradox is lived out through the interplay of contem plation and action. But more than this, the Christian must also learn from the secular world itself about the presence of God within it.

One may wonder how far the translation of supernatural-natural into contemplative-active polarities does justice to any of these concepts. However, while this modernisation may perhaps re-assure church-goers and encourage the faint-hearted, does it really show the value of belief in the explicitly supernatural with its imagery, ethic and liturgy? Surely the darkness of mystical prayer, resulting from the perennial failure of words and images to comprehend *God*, always presupposes full emotional and intellectual engagement with Christian symbols as a preliminary, if inadequate, support? But this is not the darkness in many individuals today which arises rather from the initial failure