

REVOLVER, by J. Lennon, P. McCartney, G. Harrison and R. Starr. *EMI label*, 35s.

A minor mark of the increase in their fame since I first discussed them in *New Blackfriars* in 1964 and shrewdly suggested that the end of that year might see them off can be found, on the cover-design of this latest LP, in the fact that the word 'Beatles' occurs only in tiny capitals, squashed above a photograph of the boys standing around admiringly while John Lennon combines his grandad imitation with balancing what looks like a tennis ball on his head. To name the group formally is now to waste good sleeve-space: if you didn't know a month before the record was released that it was to be called 'Revolver' and that Paul McCartney thought up the title you probably wouldn't be buying in it the first place.

This LP, like every recent one from the Beatles, shows a development in musical complexity and sophistication; there are also some interesting new features. Paul is back in focus as a writer and singer after a period when his relation with the group seemed shaky, and George Harrison is contributing more, too: the emphasis is away from John Lennon, onto a more genuine group-effort. There's a greater instrumental range which involves the use of tabla, horn, sitar, and full orchestra – the last item is used for a 'big band' sound in 'Got To Get You Into My Life', an early-Beatles-style number recalling 'Money' and 'Twist and Shout' – and 'Eleanor Rigby' has a superb backing of alternately surging and staccato violins. Electronic sound-effect and distortion is used in 'Yellow Submarine' and over-used in 'Tomorrow Never Knows', and other tracks blend this device with a plangent oriental music which shades into traditional beat rhythms ('Taxman'). 'She Said She Said' and 'I'm Only Sleeping' use abrupt and broken rhythms to add colour to otherwise uninteresting lyrics, and at several points on the record there seems to be a dislocation between musical effect and the actual lyrics: 'Love You To' begins with a long and intricate passage on the tabla which bears little relation to what comes after.

There is a slightly new emphasis also in content and attitudes, a move away from lyrics concerned with the single love-relationship towards general philosophical meditation, social reflection or satire. Here a difference is perceptible between members of the group: most of Paul's songs are still on traditional love themes, apart from his astonishing 'Eleanor Rigby': 'Here, There and Everywhere' balances a precarious line between sentimentality

and delicate lyricism but the latter feeling dominates: it is one of the Beatles' most beautiful songs, sung with subtle modulation by Paul, in what is for him a new kind of style and tone. 'Good Day Sunshine', another love song, is also Paul's, and so is 'For No One', which ends, like one or two tracks, on an interestingly inconclusive note. The wistful feelings here contrast with the tougher, Lennonesque attitudes of 'And Your Bird Can Sing', where the lyrics – 'you can't get me' – cut across a fresh melody in which the second line of harmony manages to sound like a peal of bells.

George Harrison's personality has had a deeper effect on this LP than on others: it's from him, and from John Lennon, that the controlling emphasis of withdrawal and sardonic passivity comes. The record opens with Harrison's 'Taxman', a number directly reflecting George's lazy, mildly tory dislike of pressures from outside: there are direct references here to Wilson and Heath but the total attitude is consciously negative. The interest of the content of this track is highlighted by the unoriginal musical style, the traditional falsetto asides and jerky rhythms. George also sings the slightly paranoid 'Love You To', where the same values emerge: 'You don't get time/To hang a sign on me . . . There's people standing round/Will screw you in the ground/They'll fill you in with all the things you see'. The escape from this world is into a warm, undemanding love relationship: 'I'll make love with you/If you want me to', and the same emphasis is picked up later in Harrison's 'I Want To Tell You': 'It's all right, I'll make you next time around . . . I could wait for ever/I've got time'. The same dreamy, disengaged quality is made the centre of 'I'm Only Sleeping', where John adapts his nasal style into a droning murmur and operates an effective stop-start rhythm.

'Eleanor Rigby' is one of the most inspired of all Beatles' songs, with a study of loneliness which owes a possible debt to Auden's *Ballad of Miss Gee*. The lyrics trace two, unconnecting lives – Eleanor Rigby, 'wearing the face that she keeps in a jar by the door', and Father Mackenzie, 'writing the words of a sermon that no-one will hear: no-one comes near' – which finally connect negatively in the churchyard where the second character mechanically presides over the funeral of the first. John Lennon's 'Doctor Robert' is an inferior piece of social comment in contrast, clichéd in its music – it

revives a tired snatch of Christmas carol in the middle as a desperate last resort – and unfocused and over-private in its satire.

The two zany tracks of the record – Ringo's 'Yellow Submarine' and John's 'Tomorrow Never Knows' – share a similar brand of withdrawal, the first into children's fantasy, the second into orientalism. 'Yellow Submarine' is an excruciating self-parody of a holiday camp sing-song, deliberately blatant and banal, with mocking music-hall repetitions from John of

Ringo's atrocious singing. 'Tomorrow Never Knows' combines an experimental sound-distortion with distillations of some of John's more high-powered reading: 'Turn off your mind, relax, and float downstream/It is not dying; lay down all thought, surrender to the voice/It is shining that you may know the meaning of within/It is being . . .' Whether this or 'Eleanor Rigby' sets the pattern for the next LP remains to be seen.

TERRY EAGLETON

HIERARCHY AND DEMOCRACY IN AUSTRALIA, 1788–1870, by T. L. Suttor. Pp. 344. *Melbourne University Press*, London and New York: *Cambridge University Press*, 1965. 65s.

The theme of this excellent book is indicated by its sub-title, 'The Formation of Australian Catholicism'. It is the story of how an original Benedictinization by Archbishop Polding, O.S.B., of Sydney gave way to a Hibernicization under which the Catholic Church in Australia took its definitive shape. In Professor Suttor's account this process is pictured as growth through years of conflict, in particular between 1840 and 1865. The pioneer priests and the first bishops quarrelled – often publicly. The hierarchy came under attack in an age of enthusiasm for democracy when 'public opinion campaigns sought to give the laity and lower clergy a say in church government. There was a chain reaction, moving from Adelaide (1848) to Hobart (1849) to Perth (1849–51). There was trouble in Victoria throughout the fifties, a climax in Sydney between 1856 and 1860, and an epilogue in Queensland 1861–3' (p. 6). Although this struggle did not bring a transfer of power from the hierarchy to clerico-laic committees, it did help to determine that Australian Catholicism would be largely Irish, secular and proletarian and not English, Benedictine and middle-class. Accompanying the conflicts was a full and critical press publicity, to say nothing of recurrent outbursts of sectarianism.

As a setting to the Church's internal crisis was the challenge of secular liberalism, that modern autonomy sanctioned by religious agnosticism. In the Australian struggle between liberty and dogma the lack of institutionalized traditions and the emphasis on adaptability 'favoured the liberty-progress religion' (p. 245). The conflict embodied itself in the education issue. A neutral, secular State system of schools emerged. Catholics rejected this manifestation of secular liberalism and with enormous generosity built up their own privately-supported schools, staffed by an army of Irish nuns and

brothers. There were too the Sisters of St Joseph, founded by Melbourne-born Mother Mary McKillop who many hope will be Australia's first canonized saint. By her schools for the poor she set to work to construct an Australian Church from the ground up.

With a noble Christian humanity which he preserved despite exhausting troubles Archbishop Polding is the hero of the book, even if Professor Suttor will not call him that. But he was a tragic hero. His vision of a genuinely Australian Church led by educated men remained unfulfilled. Polding's school, Lyndhurst Academy, sent on thirty-five of the first forty-five Catholics to graduate from Sydney University and half of all its Bachelors of Arts up to 1877. But it had to close that year, the year too of Polding's own death. The rise of an intellectual laity was retarded and after early promise the Church remained in a prolonged immaturity.

Professor Suttor is never afraid to seek the pattern and point the moral. Here and there his judgment causes discomfort. Not all would be happy with his comment on Bishop Geoghegan, the first priest in charge at Melbourne and the second bishop of Adelaide: 'as a Franciscan . . . he appears to have been a model of that broadmindedness his brethren have been slow to achieve, trust in human reason and in St Thomas Aquinas' (p. 135). One might also question the reflection that the Syllabus of Errors was a 'drastic intervention' which 'had been necessary to wake Catholics up' (p. 247). Newman stands for the fact that another response to secular liberalism was possible. But all in all Professor Suttor has given us a fine, readable study which provides a well-argued interpretation of the formation of Australian Catholicism.

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