

The more theoretical essays simply fail to notice the conflicts in Catholic thought on the missions. Fr de Graeve is enthusiastic for all forms of non-Christian religion as a dialogue partner; even a little knowledge of anthropology suggests several religious systems which would test severely Fr de Graeve's good will and ability to find common ground. Fr Smits cheerfully goes to the other extreme. 'It is a great pity that Christians failed to take the lead in the process of secularization' (p. 151). Could not Fr Kerkhofs have organized some dialogue between his contributors?

This shrinking from some tough-minded theologizing opens the door to waffle, e.g. 'books on famous people, sex and religion are best-sellers. From well-conducted discussions people gain insight, reassurance, comfort and encouragement. They are asking today fundamental questions about human life and fellowship.' (p. 146.) Talk about talk has something awfully depressing about it.

In so far as this book is worth while, it is through the particular studies of men talking and doing. These, of course, are of varying quality. 'Dialogue with Animism' is an

impossible subject, but this hardly excuses the author's neglect of the dependence of tribal religions on the tribal social structure. And surely Poland can scarcely be classed as a mission country? Fr Pierre Gregoire's view of Scandinavia is sympathetic, though the points he makes (adding up to the conclusion that co-operation in doing good is more effective than abuse from a distance) are not very startling.

Perhaps the outstanding studies are those by the Egyptian Dominican, Fr Anawati, and an Indian Jesuit, Fr Rayan. Fr Anawati describes the friendship of a group of Dominicans with Egyptian Islamic scholars, Fr Rayan gives a remarkable account of the vocation of a Christian sadhu in Kerala. Other worthwhile accounts of personal contacts are given for Japan by Fr Nebreda and for Thailand by Fr Ulliana. Etienne Cornelis has provided an appendix to the latter article, discussing the Buddhist concept of the self.

There are good things to be fished out of this book, but the overall impression is somehow depressing, perhaps because 'dialogue' can never be treated as a thing in itself.

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THE MECHANISM OF MIND, by Edward de Bono. *Jonathan Cape*, London, 1969. 304 pp. (£1.75).

Mr de Bono has a thesis about what he has christened 'Lateral Thinking'. (See *The Use of Lateral Thinking* (Jonathan Cape 1967).) This particular mode of thought is to be contrasted with our usual mental habits, called vertical or logical thinking, which de Bono contends are too restrictive for us to cope with some recalcitrant problems. With the employment of lateral thought solutions emerge.

It is de Bono's contention that he can explain why we do not employ lateral thought, in terms of the way in which brains function. Consistently employing an equivocation between minds and brains, he builds up a model of the brain from a phenomenology of mental activity, and settles for the 'hot water on jelly' model. He believes that mental activity is primarily memory activity, and that memory operates in a similar fashion to the building up of patterns on a surface of jelly as caused by impinging hot water; the memory being identified with the surface pattern. He starts from recognizable features of mental activity, and tries to design a mechanical model to simulate some aspects of that activity. He then supposes that the *modus operandi* of his model can be used to explain the workings of the

brain. To simulate the consequences is hardly to reproduce the mechanism. (And, of course, mental events are linked to human *actions* while things just *happen* to jelly.) This approach may give us some insight, but by no means sufficient to support the author's main argument. Mr de Bono supposes that he has demonstrated the inability of human beings to indulge in lateral thought, because he has shown that the brain simulator cannot think laterally. It is an obvious conclusion that hot water on jelly cannot think laterally (or even at all), but that is to say nothing about brains. We must conclude the de Bono is mistaken in supposing that the brain cannot think laterally; after all, he wrote his 1967 book telling us how to do it.

To avoid his unhappy conclusion about the pathological ineptitude of human minds, we are offered a cure encapsulated in one word: PO. We are offered an analysis of this word by comparison with the more familiar word: 'NO.' On page 268 we are told that 'po is to lateral thinking what no is to logical thinking'. And on page 245 'Logic is the management of "NO" . . . (and that) . . . Most logical processes can be reduced to identity and non-identity'.

This is to misunderstand logic. Logic is not analysable in terms of yeses and noes, and the entailment relation resists a truth-functional analysis, and further it is not a symmetrical relation which it would be if it were a matter of identity and non-identity. From 'p entails q' we cannot deduce 'q entails p' but only that 'not-q entails not-p' . . . hardly a paradigm of symmetry.

So what of 'po' and its relation to lateral thought? Firstly it cannot be necessary, since the 1967 book does not use it. Further, for a putative word to reach that exalted status it must possess meaning, and for that it must have a regular (uniform) use in a language and rules governing its use. However, we are told that it can be used indiscriminately to do anything. So we are unable to distinguish a use from an abuse, hence 'po' is meaningless. If

putting 'po' in front of a sentence has the same effect as saying: 'suspend your sense of reality and give freedom to your imagination'; then this may be a helpful, if not new, approach to problem solving, and is unrelated to any thesis about brains. As de Bono says: 'One would hardly set out to explore the intricacies of flight with a model aeroplane made of clay' (p. 36).

However, we should note that new (though well-formed) concepts internalized with new words can affect our habits of mind. For example, the introduction of the notion of zero revolutionized mathematics.

The whole problem as to which habits of mind will expedite the rate of growth of human knowledge still stands in need of much more attention, and if the production of this book leads to such efforts than a useful purpose will have been served.

ERIK MILLSTONE

NEW LIVES, NEW LANDSCAPES, by Nan Fairbrother. *Architectural Press*, London, 1970. £3.75.

Suddenly pollution, conservation, ecology, urban environment, countryside have become political by-words. They are the medium through which many of the newer forms of democracy will develop; participation in environmental self-determination and control may well prove, in the future, to be central to political struggle. However, there are unscrupulous politicians, scientists and industrialists exploiting the situation and jumping on the bandwagon in order to bolster their guilty consciences or camouflage continuing misdeeds.

In all this it is easy to forget the hard facts of interaction between man's rural and urban artifacts and landscape; or rather that, by and large, these artifacts *are* the landscape. Nan Fairbrother brings to the consideration of this interaction several fresh and vital qualities: a childhood in a two-up, two-down West Riding terrace house in the Depression; long spells of family life in the country; a degree in English and with it a lucid style; and above all a real, warm but unsentimental concern for qualities which she has, clearly, experienced, analysed and evaluated.

She shows how hardly any British landscape today is truly 'natural', although she perhaps underestimates the size of the Highlands, Pennine moors and Northumberland coastal strips which are untouched by Forestry Commission, farming or nuclear submarine projects. Farming, mining and quarrying, afforestation and man-made erosion, industry, roads,

railways and now airports, spoil heaps, housing, electricity lines, tourism and seaside recreation—these have shaped almost the totality of our environmental experience. Some processes have shaped and re-shaped the landscape slowly, imperceptibly over long periods of time; others have been abrupt and usually ill-considered or based on oversimple notions of amenity or land use.

Protection and conservation of the *status quo* cannot succeed; '. . . we *must* disturb it to survive'. Survival is argued first, on economic principles of production, industry and housing. But she is also aware that survival is really about the meaning of lives supported by economic structures, and that it is becoming increasingly difficult to discern this meaning in symbolic form in the chaotic mess which production considerations on the one hand, and conservation on the other, are creating.

Perhaps the worst examples she describes and illustrates (the book has 299 illustrations, mostly excellent and carefully selected photographs) are those where the conflict between human activity and open land has resulted in ill-defined, marginal land with no obvious use or character. Quickly these areas become the dumping grounds of private and public enterprises. They form vast transitional areas between city centres and rural areas; only rarely are imaginative rehabilitation schemes applied. They stand in contrast to the massive industrial landscapes, with their own scale, dynamic and meaning. She has a particularly good descrip-