

probabilities emerge washed, like Eliot's hippopotamus, as white as snow. The mathematics of this detergent transformation are not described, and the too-inquisitive reader is warned (in italics) that he will need to consult the author's Ph.D. thesis. But one may assume that most readers, on hearing that 'it was necessary to solve maximum likelihood equations by iterative methods' and on being further assured that 'the accuracy of these methods was measured by Monte Carlo simulation', will be only too willing to take it all on trust; and they will have in store for them the comforting assertion of the final chapter that this has been the first fertility study in England to use 'reliable mathematical techniques'. Yet it may be observed that one of the reasons for reporting an investigation in a monograph is to give the author space to describe his method in detail, so that others can repeat his work, whereas in the present monograph the reader is referred to an unpublished thesis for an account (unaccompanied by details or examples) of a method which is not merely new but is claimed to represent an advance. Moreover the author's reasons (page 60) for not using a standard and comprehensible method are far from convincing.

We should note, with admiration and possibly with surprise, that the routine clinical records of a large non-teaching mental hospital had been so well kept that, without anything further being needed, they were able to serve as the source of data for so sophisticated a study as this. Perhaps because she is not herself a clinician, the author does not acknowledge her indebtedness to the registrars, but we may well feel that their industry reflects a degree of clinical training and thoroughness on which British psychiatry can congratulate itself.

E. H. HARE.

PSYCHOSYSTEMATICS

Insight Therapy; Methodology, Psychosystematics and Differential Dynamics. By TIBOR AGOSTON. State of Ohio Department of Mental Hygiene. Columbus. 1969. Pp. 334. Price not stated.

This book is an introduction to the principles of psychotherapy and leans heavily on psychoanalytical theory and practice. It does not, however, confine itself to a presentation of psychoanalysis, but derives its principles from a wider framework of abnormal psychology. The author uses the term 'psychosystematics' for the combined study of all aspects of behaviour (genetic, dynamic, socio-cultural etc.). The three steps in which 'insight therapy' proceeds are exploration (with the free association method

as mainstay), interpretation and working through with the patient.

There is not much originality in the author's tenets, but he can at least claim a didactic merit: the field covered by him is methodically well structured and instructively dealt with in 202 paragraphs, the headings of which are listed in the front, thus replacing an index at the end. It is no mean attainment to give an exhaustive exposition of abnormal psychology on 334 small-sized pages, part of which are given over to a wealth of references.

This is achieved at a cost: the style is at times dictionary-like and somewhat cryptic. One wonders what a beginner can make of sentences like: 'the groundwork of insight is psychosystematics' (p. 35) or 'pedophils are assumed to be psychotic' (p. 317). Nevertheless, it is the student and the beginner in the profession at whom this book is directed, and who on the whole will find it a useful guide to psychotherapy, a field which is actually short of such guides.

STEPHEN KRAUSS.

A SHARED NEUROSIS

Man and his Culture; Psychoanalytic Anthropology after Totem and Taboo. Edited by WARNER MUESTERBERGER. London: Rapp and Whiting. 1969. Pp. 397. Price 84s.

This is a collection of fourteen papers by various authors, published over the last 30 years and now brought together in one volume for those unable to consult the original publications. One of the papers is an original contribution, as also is the introduction by Muensterberger himself. At least one, however, has been republished recently in another collection of papers.

The basic tenet of these works is that culture is a shared neurosis formed as a response to unconscious conflicts and through which the individuals express these conflicts, particularly the Oedipal ones. Thus, a culture, like a neurosis, may be interpreted in terms of theories of the unconscious. While this may be acceptable in the therapeutic situation, it is of dubious value as an academic exercise in anthropology. Psychoanalytic anthropology and the 'Culture and Personality' school were fashionable in the United States in the forties and fifties. It has never been a popular approach among British social anthropologists, and interest in this field, even among Americans, has waned considerably in the course of the sixties.

Several authors apologize for Freud's *Totem and Taboo*, excusing its faults, particularly his use of Lamarckian ideas and the inheritance of the unconscious, as being products of the current scientific