

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his method in detail, so that others can repeat his work, whereas in the present monograph the reader is referred to an unpublished thesis for an account (unaccompanied by details or examples) of a method which is not merely new but is claimed to represent an advance.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

ideas at the turn of the century. Freud's own emotional difficulties in his relationship with his father are also invoked by Freeman to explain his lapses.

The concepts of normal and abnormal are dealt with in two papers. That these are 'Key Concepts in Ethnopsychiatry' is open to question, and Devereux bases his argument on the approved social position of transvestite shamans in northern America and Asia. This approach seems to overemphasize one rather exotic item of behaviour. Neither spiritualist mediums who go into trances in London nor Mr. Danny La Rue's drag show have brought much worry to psychiatrists through indecision as to whether such activities are normal or abnormal.

This book will appeal to convinced psychoanalysts who wish to have confirmation that their concepts can be used as explanations of phenomena from other cultures. Most anthropologists continue to prefer their traditional ways of organizing their data.

JOHN ORLEY.

ACTION AND COUNTERACTION

Conflict and Reconciliation. A Study in Human Relations and Schizophrenia. By HELM STIERLIN. Science House, New York. 1969. Pp. 267. Price not stated.

This work is introduced as if it were built upon the solid rock of Hegel's concept of action and counteraction, and it continues stressing throughout the needs of schizophrenic patients in a near-existentialist approach. Dr. Stierlin is an analyst, but he obviously does not agree with Freud who left psychotics strictly alone. He also describes the analyst as a 'guardian', and the whole first part of the book is concerned with the dichotomies arising within the patient and between the patient and his environment, which includes the analyst. The analytic situation of gratification versus frustration is stressed, and so is the dichotomy between difference and sameness, moment and duration, stimulation and stabilization, closeness and distance.

The author is obviously prepared to use transference in the initial stages of the therapeutic relationship.

Dr. Stierlin is in a particularly favourable position, as he can spend all his time with a very small number of patients, and he tries very hard to convince us that the psychotherapy of schizophrenia is a workable proposition. He admits that United States psychiatrists are perhaps more or less alone now in seeing schizophrenia as a purely psychogenic illness, and this viewpoint might not be acceptable to many readers, including serious analysts. The results as described by the author are disappointing, although in at least

one case the therapist got very involved with the patient, who showed a temporary improvement which non-analysts would probably ascribe to the Hawthorn effect. There are other points on which one can disagree with the author; for instance he refers to a recovered psychotic as having suffered from an 'anxiety of mental illness'; he probably meant anguish.

The book is compassionate and obviously deeply thought out. Those psychiatrists who wish to learn more about psychogenesis of schizophrenia should read it, and even the non-analysts can learn quite a lot. Hegel is at the back of Dr. Stierlin's mind all the time, as for instance in applying the philosophy of change from quality into quantity to the lessening of thought association in schizophrenics. This of course is plausible and makes sense, but it really does not satisfy the more eclectically orientated psychiatrist who is also concerned with biochemical and genetic aspects of the disease.

The concepts of Dr. Stierlin and their application to schizophrenia can be easily translated to non-malignant emotional disturbances, and this makes the book even more valuable.

G. C. HELLER.

A PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT TECHNIQUE

S.C.I. Structured Clinical Interview Manual. By EUGENE I. BURDOCK and ANNE S. HARDESTY. (Springer Publishing Company) 1969. New York. Pp. 64. Price \$3.50.

The findings of a number of research projects which used this interview are now appearing in print, and it is timely that the manual itself has at last been published. The S.C.I. is essentially a research instrument and it is important to understand its advantages and limitations. It was developed as a supplement to the same authors' 'Ward Behaviour Rating Scale', and is designed as a test of social and psychological adjustment. It is not intended as an aid to diagnosis, and the authors stress that 'the S.C.I. is a psychological, not a psychiatric technique'. The interview is intended for examining individuals or groups, for assessing response to drug therapy and to be used as a screening device in the general population. An overall score of abnormality can be obtained or section scores ('subtests') can be plotted on a graph to provide a symptom profile. It consists of a set of standard, open-ended questions which serve as controlled stimuli to which the subject responds by expressing his ideas and behaviour. The interviewer then makes judgements on the presence or absence of symptoms. No other questions are allowed. Thus,