

who care for children, that all shall be enabled to use what they see and hear and otherwise experience to their maximum advantage.

STEPHANIE M. LEESE.

Positive Disintegration. By KAZIMIERZ DABROWSKI. London: J. & A. Churchill Ltd. 1964. Pp. xxviii + 132. Price \$5.50.

The author, who is professor of child psychiatry and mental hygiene in Warsaw, has, in the course of his post-graduate studies, absorbed influences in a number of West European centres of learning, including London. Contrary to expectation, Pavlovian psychobiology is not given prominence in the author's system which, with its emphasis on the realization of a self-ideal, takes up a rather idealistic position. The influence the reader is expressly reminded of is that of Hughlings Jackson who formulated a theory according to which the functional evolution and dissolution of the c.n.s. proceeds level by level upwards or downwards, as the case may be.

The development of personality is the central theme of the book and the focal point of personal development is, in turn, seen in "positive disintegration". In the three-step progression from primitive integration through disintegration (e.g. in puberty) to re-integration on a higher level, disintegration is seen as an essential and positive step. Much thought is given to elaborating the foundations and ramifications of this theoretical model which is further adorned by the creation of a number of new terms (e.g. that of the "disposing and directing centre"), as if there was a real need for them. However, the documentation by clinical material remains extremely scanty.

In the field of medical pedagogics a lofty theoretical model of this kind may have a guiding role to play, but its imposition upon the entire field of psychopathology not only sounds forced and laboured, but also in many respects goes astray. Severe psychoneuroses and even psychoses are seen in the same light as are minor developmental crises. Concepts are loosely used, e.g. when magical thinking in childhood is subsumed under positive disintegration. A point, however, on which many will fully agree with the author, is his emphasis on the positive role which inner conflict often plays in personal development.

Jason Aronson of Harvard, editor of the *International Journal of Psychiatry*, has edited the book in English and added a valuable, because precise introduction which is at the same time a critical appraisal of Dabrowski's theory. Usefully, the reader

is reminded of similar trends in contemporary psychiatry, such as Lindemann's concept of psychosocial "crisis", Erikson's "identity in the life cycle" concept, and Szasz's criticism of the psychiatric "illness" concept.

STEPHEN KRAUSS.

4. ANTHROPOLOGY

Continuities in Cultural Evolution. By MARGARET MEAD. New Haven and London: Yale University Press. 1964. Pp. 471. Price 63s. \$8.50.

Anthropology: A Human Science. By MARGARET MEAD. Princeton, New Jersey: D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc. 1964. Pp. 260. Price \$1.95.

The advent of Darwin's centenary, Julian Huxley's recent writings on evolution and humanist ethics (complete with genuflections to Teilhard de Chardin), and the nuclear threat have each contributed to the impulse behind Dr. Mead's *Continuities in Cultural Evolution*. In this book she attempts to place in relation to man's evolutionary development the greatest threat the species has yet encountered, namely that of nuclear near-extinction. The character of contemporary warfare is considered as a cultural crisis, the full appreciation of which includes an understanding of the mechanism of human evolution. Since evolution at the human level depends less on genetic change than on cultural development, the first section of the volume is concerned with a survey of the means by which culture is transmitted and transmuted. It comprises an ambitious survey of empathy and intuition, learning and teaching processes, language and dance, artefacts and records; inevitably it is condensed and highly abstract. The second section focuses on the question of the size of the unit selected in evolutionary studies, and the kind of observations which can be made on small groups of individuals ("micro-evolutionary") as against societies in general ("macro-evolutionary"). A fascinating vignette is included of a recent cultural leap in the Admiralty Islands initiated by one highly gifted individual, against a background of favourable social forces. Mediating between the "great man" and society lies a small group of followers, and one of the author's recurrent themes is the role of such bands of disciples as an essential component of evolutionary change. The final section, in which the pace notably quickens, is a review of what can be suggested on anthropological grounds to meet the current threat and to accelerate our advance. One recommendation is to supply the peoples of remote areas with selected cultural "devices" in the hope that they will be able to take over if existing

BR. J Psychiatry
 LL July-Dec 1965