Total Man—Towards an Evolutionary Theory of Personality by Stan Gooch
Allen Lane The Penguin Press, £4.50

Such an arresting title would presuppose a massive volume and the prediction would be correct. The author takes 534 pages and on the very last, promises yet another volume to portray something, but what? A review is meant to convey an informed critique of the contents of a book, which in this particular instance, is far from easy. Many a reader will, in fact, abandon the project of thorough reading or skip more than one chapter.

The author would be embarrassed to read that, in one way, he elicits the same boredom as the academic experimental psychology he chides throughout the text. If the impersonal, statistically-loaded text of a contemporary paper in most journals irritates by its virtual loss of contact with living reality, this book manages to produce the same result by its repetition, circumlocution, meandering and undisciplined text.

This is a great pity because, somewhere, buried in this exercise of thinking aloud, the author is pointing the way to some important things which the reader must latently identify with in order to recognise. I am in sympathy with much of the author's thinking, which was a much needed encouragement to complete the task of review.

The author holds degrees in psychology and modern languages and in this background paves the way for an onslaught on academic (research) psychology which ignores the subjective, emotional, personal aspect of man. However, this is not the main theme of the book which opens by drawing attention to themes in literature like that of Faust and of Jekyll and Hyde.

The opening chapter, which is devoted to the concept of quality, introduces the principal theme—that contemporary man is the evolutionary product of two systems which are called A and B.

System B is the more ancient of the two and refers to a framework of reference which is essentially 'female', concerned with the preservation of the species. System A, on the other hand, is a later development, 'male' in character, which depends much more on consciousness than unconsciousness. It functions through rational processes which rely on analysis, separation and splitting. System A is primarily concerned with the individual.

The text is taken up with material found in man's beliefs, customs and social structures to support the theory for the development of the two systems A and B, existing in the same person side by side, and managing in a few individuals to be integrated in a further system (C) which reflects wholeness.

No one, least of all the author, would expect to receive confirmation or denial of his theory. This is simply not possible on the available evidence. What is certainly possible is to sympathise deeply with the view that too much emphasis on one or other system is dangerous and Western society, if anything, needs a massive injection of 'B system' experience, but not to the total exclusion of A, for if there is one message in this book it is the desirability of balance. Balance also means selectivity and any further ventures into this interesting subject would be immeasurably enhanced by a systematic pruning of the text.

J. Dominian

The Social Psychology of Work by Michael Argyle
Allen Lane The Penguin Press, £2.95

For the majority, work is mainly a source of income. And although a surprisingly high proportion are satisfied, or even very satisfied, with jobs which provide little intrinsic reward; most, in fact, expect little beyond the pay-packet. The mind-deadening tedium of the assembly-line, the dull monotony of machine-minding, the lack of any opportunity to use more than a part of potential skill and ability is the lot of all but a fortunate few. (Yet few complain.)

Small wonder that sociologists have seen the dehumanising effects of work as a major source of alienation in contemporary society. And it is with such issues as the organisation of work, its meaning and satisfactions, that Michael Argyle's book is concerned.

Although the discussion of mental health and work is relegated to an appendix, it is one of the more interesting and challenging sections of the text. Despite the publicity given to executive stress, what is less well known is that mental health declines sharply as we go down the skill and status hierarchy.

Researches show mental health to be very poor among semi-skilled factory workers on production lines. This is attributed not to any physical or mental strain, but to the lack of opportunity to use abilities. Low-grade work causes lowered self-esteem and feelings of failure and inferiority.

The discussion of the extent to which leisure can compensate for unfulfilling work is disappointing and fails to take account of much recent work. It can at least be argued that work which treats