

has diminished the credibility of traditional western religions, yet men in an age of uncertainty need some sort of a creed. The need is filled by a variety of new cults, many of which have attempted to come to terms with science by incorporating real, or more often spook, scientific elements into their *Weltanschauung*. Having advanced the thesis, Dr Evans proceeds to illustrate it extensively from the history of Scientology and its strange creator, L. Ron Hubbard, from the Dianetics of the 1950s to today's incorporated "church of Scientology". He then deals more briefly with some of the other fringe cults, hopefully fitting them into the same thesis.

For the sceptic the book is fun to read; Chris Evans has worked hard to assemble a set of cheerfully anecdotal histories, which succeed in putting down in turn each of these more barmy manifestations of religion as the opium of the people with a healthy dose of Anglo-Saxon empiricism and a wicked eye for revealing detail. Believers, on the other hand, are scarcely likely to be convinced, if only because the author plays throughout the slightly unsatisfactory role of argumentation by story-telling. Clear analysis of just what the scientologists and the flying saucer fans believe and why is sometimes sacrificed for the throw-away punch line. Dr Evans could reasonably reply that he was not writing a "teach yourself Scientology" or another addition to the burgeoning literature of Ufology, but the blurb promises us more: not "a scientist's extended sneer at the intellectually inadequate . . . (but) the bases of the truce between what we know and what we don't know".

This is where I think Chris Evans has chickened out, for he has not done this. We never learn where he himself stands (except as an amused observer on the sidelines, watching the fans greet L. Ron as he arrives at Heathrow, or the shaven heads of the Hare Krishnas dancing down Oxford Street).

Clearly he does not "believe in" saucers, or Thetans, or the power of Yoga. But what, if anything, does he believe in—other than the validity of the scientific method? Without this perspective, as a scientific enquiry the book is like Archimedes without his fulcrum. As a sociological/philosophical enquiry, too, it lacks depth. Is it enough to assert man's need for some type of belief system without exploring more fully who needs what and why? Who becomes a scientologist? Is it true that there is a class difference between the Hare Krishnas (working class) and the Black Boxers and Gurdjieffians (upper middle)? It is a pity that the author does not address himself a little to these questions, even at the speculative level.

There is one area of conspicuous omission; the most substantive "cult

of unreason" today must surely be the conscious rejection of science, especially by the young, in search of an alternative mode of being à la Rozsak, a rejection of science undoubtedly occasioned by the very real oppressive role that it has come to play in the western world. No hint of this critique of science comes through Dr Evans's account, and in that sense it is curiously out of touch with a large element of his theme. Nonetheless, the book is both brave—for the wrath of the cultists when aroused is notorious, and their arm often disturbingly long—and fun, an entertaining history of some of the minor twentieth century lunacies. *Nature* readers should take it on holiday with them.

STEVEN ROSE

### Japonaiserie

*Proteins: Structure and Function*. Edited by M. Funatsu, K. Hiromi, K. Imahori, T. Murachi and K. Narita. Volume 1. Pp. x+381. £10. Volume 2. Pp. x+270. £7.50. (Kodansha: Tokyo; Halsted: New York and London, April 1973.)

ONE has become accustomed to publishers' *pots pourris* that contain collections of apparently unrelated items, linked only by the blurb writer's skill. What unites the articles in *Proteins, Structure and Function*—and this must be accounted an ingenious gimmick—is that all the authors are Japanese. The editors in their preface justify their selection by the suggestion that much of the Japanese work in protein chemistry is buried in domestic journals, sometimes in Japanese, and is therefore lost to colleagues working in the same field in the West. They have therefore encouraged their authors to give personal rather than archival views of their subject, so as to reflect the interest and style of their own laboratories, and consequently a rather large proportion of the references throughout are to papers by themselves and other Japanese authors. If this occasions a certain imbalance of treatment, it also makes for very readable accounts which specialists will for the most part welcome. The choice of subjects is necessarily arbitrary, for not all aspects of protein chemistry are represented in Japan. Volume 1 contains articles on enzymes of known sequence, trypsin, lysozyme, phage lysozymes and T<sub>1</sub> ribonuclease, on which there are two separate chapters. The emphasis varies considerably from chapter to chapter in accordance with the known inclinations of the authors. Thus Inagami writing on trypsin places the emphasis on enzymic mechanism, Hamaguchi

and Hayashi strike a balance between enzymology and physical chemistry of egg lysozyme, the account by Tsugita and Ikeya-Ocada of phage lysozymes and λ endolysin contains a generous lacing of genetics, and the two chapters by Takahashi and by Oshima and Imahori on ribonuclease T<sub>1</sub> concentrate on the physical chemistry of the enzyme and its interactions. Volume 2 has a rather curious assortment of subjects, directed, say the editors, towards mechanism and regulation of enzymes. There are chapters on amylases, bromelain, the toxic protein, ricin, threonine deaminases, ribulose-1,5-diphosphate carboxylases and the significance of N-terminal acetylation. The title has been cunningly chosen: it is not "*The Proteins*", and it obviously does not compete in any sense with the set of volumes edited by Neurath. "*Some Proteins*" might be an even better title, and it might well perhaps be regarded as a kind of supplement to the series of *Advances in Protein Chemistry*.

A. D'ALBIS

### Illustrated Taxonomy

*Classification of the Animal Kingdom: An Illustrated Guide*. By R. B. Freeman. Pp. 55. (English Universities: London, 1973.) £1.35.

THIS admirable book, by one of the country's leading taxonomists, is a fully illustrated classification of the animal kingdom which deserves a wide circulation among sixth formers, first year biology students at universities, and interested amateurs including every young nephew, niece and cousin who shows a taste for natural history. The classifications are authoritative, and the text is prefaced by an introduction on the principles and purposes of taxonomy. The illustrations (by the staff of *Readers Digest*) are beautifully executed and sometimes rather touching: thus the illustration of *Dugong dugon* (the Dugong) has "evolutionary dead end" written all over its rather morose features.

P. B. MEDAWAR

### Solar Environment

*Coronal Expansion and Solar Wind*. By A. J. Hundhausen. Pp. xii+238. (Springer: Berlin and New York, 1972.) 68 DM; \$21.60.

THE decade elapsed since E. N. Parker's monograph, *Interplanetary Dynamical Processes* (Wiley Interscience, New