in his introduction that the value of the volume ‘lies in its
being a representative exposition of current hypotheses and research, written by men who are advocates of the
hypotheses or significant contributors to the research.’

MICHAEL SHEPHERD

INFORMATIONSTHEORIE UND PSYCHOPATHOLOGIE DES
GEDÄCHTNISSES (INFORMATION THEORY AND PSYCHO-
PATHOLOGY OF MEMORY) Edited by A. E. Adams
The author of this monograph dispenses with the hypo-
thetical engrams for which there is no morphological,
physiological, or biochemical proof. He further regards
the engram theory as sterile. He prefers the measurable
cognitive structural content of signals or symbols received
or given by information. The information psychology
of memory is treated as a special case of structuralism.
The ‘morphem’ is the minimal free form of speech
structure, and the ‘bit’ is the numerical unity of informa-
tion. These hypotheses are presented mathematically and
applied to experimental and clinical material.

Those interested in the mechanistic explanation of
memory, and of its pathology, will find the book and its
bibliography valuable, although in the reviewer’s opinion
the main problems are not advanced by it; they open up
new fields of research.

J. SCHORSTEIN

MELANCHOLIE IN FORSCHUNG, KLINIK UND BEHANDLUNG.
Herausgegeben von Walter Schulte und Werner
The majority of the 38 papers in this volume were
delivered at a meeting of German psychiatrists in Baden-
Baden two years ago. The editors are well aware of the
extent to which the popularity of the affective psychoses
as a theme for symposia is due to the advent of effective
antidepressant drugs, but they think the time is ripe for
examining progress in various fundamental aspects of
depression, as a preliminary to integrating them into a
synoptic whole. The more this goal is attained, they hold,
the sooner will there be an end to unprofitable dispute
about the distinction between ‘endogenous’ and ‘reactive’
depression.

The first 12 papers deal with clinical problems; some of
them, such as Professor Angst’s on the course of de-
pressive psychoses and Dr. Stenstedt’s on genetics, are
workmanlike contributions, others are semi-philosophical
disquisitions which fog the issues they are intended to
clarify. Epidemiological and trans-cultural aspects are
next briefly reviewed. They are followed by sections on
psychopathology and psychotherapy, drug treatment,
biochemistry, and social aspects.

Because of their origin and the mode of presentation
this collection of papers falls midway between a sympos-
ium report and a review of recent advances. Personal
experience plays a large part in many of the articles.—
for example, in the survey of psychoanalytic psycho-
therapy by an American, Dr. Lesse, or in the survey of
biochemical findings by a British authority, Derek
Richter. Professor Schulte, in summing up the main
advances disclosed by the conference is somewhat
ambivalent. He sees the subject opening up on all sides
and yielding objective findings, while at the same time
recognizing the distinctive and unique character of the
affective disorders: but he has to admit that in important
respects the phenomena are still puzzling and obscure.

AUBREY LEWIS

EPIDEMIOLOGY OF NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASE Edited by
E. D. Acheson. British Medical Bulletin, 27, No. 1,
This number continues in the well-known format and is
an interesting collection of papers illustrating that the
epidemiological approach is valid for many non-com-
 municable diseases, a concept already familiar to neurol-
ogists. There is a paper by J. K. Wing on international
comparisons in the study of the functional psychoses,
and occasional use of neurological disorders to illustrate
an argument, but in general this number has little of
special interest to neurologists. Nevertheless, as a short
survey of an important approach to aetiology it is
recommended to doctors of all interests.

J. A. SIMPSON

DRUGS AND CEREBRAL FUNCTION Edited and compiled by
W. Lynn Smith. (Pp. 288; illustrated; $17.25.) Thomas:
It is an unfortunate ambition of the organizers of con-
ferences and symposia to see the proceedings of the meet-
ing in print. In a few cases, where the meeting focused on
a specific topic at a timely moment, the result is worth-
while or may even be a classic (such as the meeting that
led to the publication of The Transmission of Schizo-
phrenia). But most meetings should not seek immortality
since the result is all too often an expensive, scrappy
collection of brief disconnected papers with little relation-
ship to each other, and which have all probably seen the
light of day on many previous occasions. The book
currently under review belongs, alas, pre-eminently to the
latter class. The average length of the communications
cover six to eight pages of print.

J. R. SMYTHIES

PARENTAL ATTITUDES TOWARDS EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN
By Harold D. Love. (Pp. 167; price not stated.) Thomas:
It was something of a surprise to discover on reading
this book that the children referred to are not merely the
gifted ones but also those with any form of handicap—
mental, physical, or emotional. This is how the term
‘exceptional’ is used in the USA. The author, an educator
on the staff of the State College of Arkansas, sets out to
survey the topic of parental attitudes towards such children.
This is certainly an important theme with both
theoretical and practical implications, for teachers and
doctors as well as the children and their families. The
book is a disappointment.

Firstly, the ‘level’ of the writing fluctuates widely, in
one place, for example, spelling out simply the difference
between mental illness and mental retardation, in
INFORMATIONSTHEORIE UND PSYCHOPATHOLOGIE DES GEDÄCHTNISSES (INFORMATION THEORY AND PSYCHOPATHOLOGY OF MEMORY)

J. Schorstein

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