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 PSYCHOPATHOLOGY OF MEMORY) Edited by A. E. Adams (Pp. 124; illustrated; \$13.20.) Springer: Berlin 1971.

The author of this monograph dispenses with the hypothetical 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 information. 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 Mende. (Pp. 236. DM 29.70.) Thieme: Stuttgart. 1970. 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 depressive 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 symposium 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 psychotherapy 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, January, 1971. (£2.00). British Council: London.

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-communicable diseases, a concept already familiar to neurologists. 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: Springfield, Ill. 1970.

It is an unfortunate ambition of the organizers of conferences and symposia to see the proceedings of the meeting in print. In a few cases, where the meeting focused on a specific topic at a timely moment, the result is worthwhile or may even be a classic (such as the meeting that led to the publication of *The Transmission of Schizophrenia*). But most meetings should not seek immortality, since the result is all too often an expensive, scrappy collection of brief disconnected papers with little relationship 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: Springfield, Ill. 1970.

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