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

another quoting rather arbitrarily from research studies in a variety of fields. It is doubtful whether the stated aim of writing on this topic for educators, physicians, psychologists, ministers, and parents themselves is realistic.

The text abounds with pious sentiments, mostly unremarkable, but presumably intended as correctives to unhealthy parental attitudes. There are occasional gross inaccuracies, such as the statement that sociopathic children come mainly from 'good families'! In a discussion of hospitalization of children, there is no reference to the work of Bowlby or Robertson, nor any suggestions about the value of frequent visits by parents.

Effective psychological testing, we are told, involves two factors, (1) a competent examiner and (2) an adequate test. Surely there is a third factor—namely, a child motivated to succeed. Not recommended.

F. H. STONE

DRUG DEPENDENCE: Aspects of ego functions By Henry Krystal and Herbert A. Raskin (Pp. 127; \$5.95.) Wayne State University Press: Detroit. 1970.

Few today would suppose that psychoanalysis was going to offer all the answers, but a coherent and authoritative up-dating of psychoanalytic thinking on drug dependence is badly needed. It would be a sanguine pharmacologist who would contend that the nature of drug dependence will be resolved entirely by the monkey with its indwelling catheter, and equally it must take an unusually bold sociologist to claim that the truth can come entirely from study of social systems and social processes. The very word 'dependence' is an inviting *double entendre*—free-association inevitably leads from pharmacological meaning to thoughts of attachment and loss, and onwards then perhaps to consideration of the individual's dependence on his social role.

The authors assert that drug dependence 'invariably' implies underlying mental disturbance. Drug taking for this damaged and handicapped person represents 'perhaps the sole adjustive mechanism to living problems the person has available to him at the moment'. The drug dependent person is 'invariably seeking relief, modification or avoidance of painful (affective) state'. The drug user has an 'inordinate guilt about oral indulgence, related to cannibalistic problems'. Drugs must fail 'just as the original object (mother) was experienced as failing during the crucial stage in the patient's life'.

Against the backdrop of 100,000 drug addicts, news that analytic treatment is still being offered to America's drug takers may ring strangely. But if analysis—in Miss Anna Freud's phrase—provides a 'source of information', such an approach may be of scientific value even if of dubious therapeutic relevance. What price the information offered here?

GRIFFITH EDWARDS

WHO EXPERT COMMITTEE ON DRUG DEPENDENCE: (Eighteenth Report). (Pp. 45; 30p.) World Health Organisation Technical Report Series, No. 460. 1970.

Methadone maintenance and the British system of heroin prescribing receives brief critical review, the use of

opiate antagonists is discussed, news is given on American development of specialized therapeutic communities. The major interest of the document lies, however, not in its comments on this or that specific technique, but in its efforts to define those systems of ideas which determine a society's response to drug problems. 'The responses . . . cannot be regarded solely in terms of technological capacities and economic resources. A society's general value systems and aspirations as well as its particular beliefs and feelings—whether founded or unfounded—about the self-administration of dependence-producing drugs are potent determinants of its responses.'

The report thus raises many questions. We are, for instance, invited to inquire as to how much of the current response is historical accident rather than rationally based. We are invited to spell out closely not only the goals of treatment programmes but the goals of legislation—hypotheses are to be brought into the daylight. While on this tack the Report might perhaps have been expected introspectively to ask of itself why tobacco was excluded from its field of vision, why almost three times as many pages were allotted to treatment as to prevention, why the social sciences were not represented on an Expert Committee dealing with so social a problem. The report promises to stimulate much debate.

GRIFFITH EDWARDS

NOTICES

NATIONAL PARAPLEGIA FOUNDATION Nominations invited for a \$10,000 award to be granted in the Spring of 1972 to a scientist considered to have made a significant contribution towards finding a cure for paraplegia. The award is for basic research in the field of spinal cord regeneration. Details from National Paraplegia Foundation, 333 N. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60601, U.S.A.

U.K. LIAISON COMMITTEE FOR SCIENCES ALLIED TO MEDICINE AND BIOLOGY Congress on 'Interdisciplinary Investigations of the Brain' 11-13 April 1972, Oxford. Details from Dr. J. P. Nicholson, S.A.M.B., Westminster Hospital, Page Street Wing, London S.W.1.

4th SYMPOSIUM ON PEDIATRIC NEURORADIOLOGY 3-6 May Children's Memorial Hospital, Chicago, Illinois, U.S.A. Topics: craniocerebral traumatology in the newborn and infant; the posterior fossa in childhood; myelomeningocele; and craniocerebral dysgenesis. Details from Dr. A. J. Raimondi, Chairman, Division of Neurological Surgery, Children's Memorial Hospital, Chicago, Illinois, 60614, U.S.A.

3RD EUROPEAN CONGRESS ON PAEDIATRIC NEUROSURGERY: CHANGE OF DATE Now 3-7 September 1972, Göttingen. Details from Prof. Dr. med. K.-A. Bushe, Direktor der Neurochirurgischen Klinik der Universität Göttingen, 3400 Göttingen, Gosslerstrasse 10, W. Germany.