Origin, Prevention and Treatment of Affective Disorders. Edited by M. SCHOU and E. STRÖMGREN. London: Academic Press. 1979. Pp 307. £9.00.

Depression. By PAUL HAUCK. London: Sheldon Press. 1979. Pp 102. £1.95 (paperback).

These two books deal with the same subject, the causes, prevention and treatment of depression but their approaches could hardly be more different.

The volume edited by Mogens Schou and Erik Strömgren is exactly what one would expect from these internationally respected Danish research workers—a series of impeccably scientific articles where conclusions are drawn only after careful consideration of the findings and where claims for advances in knowledge are made with caution and modesty. The contributions represent the proceedings of a symposium held in 1978 to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the University of Aarhus and deal with a range of topics: epidemiology, genetics, natural history, suicide and, particularly, the use of lithium in prophylaxis and treatment. The book is intended for professional workers in psychiatry and allied fileds and can be recommended as a comprehensive and up to date review of the subject.

In contrast, Dr Paul Hauck's book presents a new theory of depression, developed by the author because orthodox methods of treatment seem to have failed him. Dr Hauck is a psychoanalytically trained clinical psychologist who is convinced that depression is caused by self-blame, by self-pity and by pity for others. These causes can be tackled, he suggests, by getting the sufferer to understand the relevance of these problems to his condition—a variation, it seems, of the rational emotive therapy of Albert Ellis to whom he dedicates his book. Moreover he states that some depressions have physical causes (particularly hypoglycaemia, which may also be responsible for mental retardation, schizophrenia and alcoholism) and these should be treated by the family doctor. Dr Hauck's book is intended for the layman—to help depressed people and their relatives—but for the seriously ill and suicidal patient, reading this book is likely to hinder his recovery.

KENNETH GRANVILLE-GROSSMAN, *Consultant Psychiatrist, St Mary's Hospital, London*

Notes About Books

Working with the Impulsive Person. Edited by H. WISHNIE and J. NEVIS-OLESEN. London: Plenum Press. 1979. Pp 194. £19.50.

A patchy and expensive conference report. An interesting chapter by Wishnie on vulnerability leading to explosive behaviour.

Violent Criminal Acts and Actors. By L. ATHENS. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul. 1980. Pp 104. £6.50.

A symbolic interactional study of 58 violent offenders. Another mechanistic account of behaviour with three actors: The Individual; Himself; His Self-Image.

The Measurement of Human Aggression. By G. EDMUNDS and D. KENDRICK. Chichester: John Wiley. 1980. Pp 223. £12.50.

A study which failed to confirm that aggressiveness is a dispositional item—it does not correlate with aggression. 'Catastrophe theory' links continuous and discontinuous data and it is proposed that once aggressive behaviours have been elicited they are reinforced in a manner which depends on the outcome of the event.

PAUL BOWDEN, *Consultant Forensic Psychiatrist, Maudsley Hospital, London*

Pharmacokinetics of Psychoactive Drugs: Further Studies. Edited by LOUIS A. GOTTSCHALK. London: SP Medical & Scientific Books. 1979. Pp 158. £14.00.

A book for the clinical pharmacologist rather than the psychiatrist. All except three of the ten chapters are concerned with the pharmacokinetics of the drugs used for the treatment of schizophrenia.

Psychopharmacology Update: New and Neglected Areas. Edited by JOHN M. DAVIS and DAVID GREENBLATT. New York: Grune & Stratton. 1979. Pp 187. $12.50.

A succinctly written useful book with chapters on the teratology of psychotropic drugs and the drug treatment of organic psychoses, personality disorders, alcoholism and anxiety syndromes. There are also two chapters on the toxicology of lithium but this subject is expanding so rapidly that they are already a little dated.

Neurotransmitters and Drugs. By ZYGMUNT L. KRUK and CHRISTOPHER J. PYCOCK. London: Croom Helm. 1979. Pp 176. £8.95, £3.95 (paperback).

A good introduction to the pharmacology of neurotransmission, a subject which is yearly increasing in importance. The prose is economic, the style didactic and the result highly effective.

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