niques, instrumentation and neuroanaesthesia. Part two covers brain tumours, common and rare, intrinsic and extrinsic, primary and secondary, while part three is devoted to aneurysm surgery. In volume two the third part of the book is completed with a description of the management of arteriovenous malformations. Part 4, 5 and 6 cover respectively trauma, infection and congenital formations in the supratentorial compartment while part 7 provides, in a brief 70 pages, an excellent account of functional neurosurgery for pain, movement disorders, epilepsy and psychosurgery. The remaining parts of volume two are devoted mainly to neurosurgery in the infratentorial compartment. Thus, the parts 8 to 15 cover the following topics: general introduction, tumour, vascular disorders, trauma, infection, congenital malformations, developmental and degenerative disorders and functional neurosurgery for facial pain and hemifacial spasm. Part 16 is a special section devoted to skull base surgery. This part, which comprises nearly 200 pages, is itself divided into 9 chapters. Finally, there is a discussion of medico-legal aspects of neurosurgical complications as it affects practice specifically in the USA.

The standard throughout is very high and many chapters are of outstanding quality in terms not only of information provided but also in terms of the reflective thought displayed in arriving at lucidly expressed conclusions.

There is some repetition and redundancy in the text.

The book is very well produced and printed on very high grade paper. The illustrations including operative photographs, excellent line drawings, and neuroradiological plates, are well reproduced and make clear the descriptions in the text. It is a book of massive physical proportions and each volume weighs nearly three kilograms. It may be an advantage in a further edition to produce the book in 4 to 5 volumes. The index of 139 pages, is both helpful and comprehensive.

Above all it is a book for neurosurgeons, although other neuroscientists may usefully dip into it. One must hope that the inexperienced trainee neurosurgeon will not be paralysed into inactivity because of the frank descriptions of the serious hazards associated potentially with every brain operation and by lack of any universally agreed consensus about how to avoid them. Instead the trainee should take heart that so many experts have analysed the key ways to minimise neurosurgical complications and incorporate this thoughtful and critical faculty into his own developing surgical armamentarium.

The book may be recommended highly to neurosurgeons in general. Sadly, the price is expensive and this work will become an indispensable reference in all neurosurgical departmental libraries.

DGT THOMAS

Pseudo-Epileptic Seizures. Edited by L GRAM, SI JOHANNESSEN, PO OSTERMAN and M SILLANPÄÄ. (Pp 165; Price: £27.00). 1993. Petersfield, UK, Wrightson Biomedical Publishing Ltd. ISBN 1-871816-18-1.

Pseudo-epileptic seizures, originally known as hysterical seizures, are important not only because of the need to differentiate them clinically from true epileptic attacks but also because of their presumed psychogenic aetiology. It is rather too simple to describe them as paroxysmal events which bear a superficial resemblance to true epileptic seizures but lack the typical EEG epileptic changes, since in almost 50% of such attacks the patient will suffer from epilepsy. Why a patient should display such extraordinary behaviour with its similarity to epilepsy is unknown. Epileptic patients who suffer from hysteria and personality changes may perhaps develop it because of their previous experience with the real illness. Others may have a pseudo-seizure as a single isolated symptom, or more usually as part of hysteria, or as a form of malingering for compensation.

In this small book the authors, mainly from Scandinavia, attempt "to bring attention to the differential diagnosis of epileptic seizures". They consider that pseudo-epileptic seizures "are not manifestations of disordered electrical activity of the brain but usually of a complicated pathopsychological background". In a few pages, we are given views on aggression, rage and epilepsy and Münchhausen's syndrome by proxy. Psychological aspects of treatment are covered and there is a chapter on aetiological models as a basis for treatment of the individual. The inevitable chapter on pseudo-seizures and sexual abuse is included. The idea that the pseudo-epileptic attack is actually a re-enactment of being pinned down and choked during sexual abuse, is far-fetched. Furthermore, there is little science in the statement that sexual abuse is high in the causation of pseudo-seizures of the "swoon" type. It is difficult to know whom this speculative and provocative work is aimed at.

TAHIR MAJEED
PO BEHAN

Stroke: A Clinical Approach. 2nd Edition. By LOUIS R CAPLAN. (Pp 562 Illustrated; Price: £62.00). 1993. Oxford, Butterworth-Heinemann Ltd. ISBN 0-7506-9181-6.

To bring out a second and fully revised edition of a single author textbook within six years of the first denotes a man with qualities of self-discipline, conviction and optimism beyond the reach of ordinary mortals. Fortunately Louis Caplan is such a man; he is widely known and respected for his clinical studies in cerebrovascular disease and this book accurately reflects his interests and talents. Single authorship has many advantages, especially when the author's interests encompass the whole field; if not, it can be a disadvantage. Much of this book is excellent, particularly the clinical chapters, but it does lack balance and some important aspects of the subject receive scant attention.

When writing on pathogenesis or clinical diagnosis Dr Caplan is authoritarian, illuminating and wholly convincing. On contentious issues such as the significance of minor degrees of stenosis of the internal carotid artery he states clearly his current practice and explains succinctly his reasons and evidence. On the vexed question of

lacunar infarction and subcortical leucoencephalopathy his views are traditional and clear—in contrast to much of the recent literature on the subject. He avoids the confusion which has arisen from clinicians, pathologists and radiologists using the same term for different conditions and *vice versa*.

Non-atherosclerotic vascular disease is now diagnosed with increasing frequency and the chapter on the recognition and management of these conditions including traumatic lesions, vasculitis, migraine-related stroke and stroke in drug-abusers is also a model of clarity and good sense.

Only in the last three chapters, on stroke prevention, complications and rehabilitation do these high standards falter. The brevity of these chapters, the lack of discussion of controversial issues and the omission of data on epidemiological issues or clinical trials suggest that these are topics of relatively little interest to the author. This, in a condition where prevention has already made great advances and where treatment of established stroke is still disappointing must detract from the value of the book as a whole.

Nevertheless in spite of these minor sins of omission, which Dr Caplan will no doubt remedy in the next edition, this is a valuable and admirably written book which will be studied with profit and enjoyment and deserves a wide readership.

RW ROSS RUSSELL

Paul Broca: Explorer of the Brain. By FRANCIS SCHILLER. (Pp 350; Price: £15.00). 1992. Corby, Oxford University Press. ISBN 0-19-507496-3.

This is a lengthy and highly detailed biography of Paul Broca. Each of the 16 chapters is copiously referenced and there is a list of Broca's publications, which total over 500. Many associate Broca's name just with dysphasia; and whilst he made an important contribution to the localisation of the motor speech area, it is not widely appreciated how diverse were his interests and achievements. These span malignant disease, and the microscope—an emerging diagnostic aid in those days and of doubtful value according to some contemporaries. Also he studied evolution, anthropology, the muscular arrangement in club foot and the causes of rickets.

Particularly, the earlier chapters provide insight into political and medical life around 1850, a time of considerable social unrest. Medical promotion prospects were then (and now?) a combination of ability and influence. This is an outstanding, scholarly and well written work. Ideal for a good "read" on holiday!

CH HAWKES