A Guide to Neuropathology. By Asao Hirano. (Pp 350; \$41.00.) New York: Igaku-Shoin Medical Publishers Inc, 1981.

This is a very good book, not only for the "beginning neuropathologist". It does fulfil the aim stated by the author: "to serve as a single reference for the wealth of fine structural information concerning neuropathologic alterations . . .". It provides a fine record of Hirano's experience and interests. There are numerous fine points that provoke questions without always answering them. Just one example: what is the nature and significance of the Hirano bodies in Schwann cells or oligodendroglia? Are these identical with the bodies in the nerve cells in the hippocampus? The book is not dogmatic. Most photographs and all electron microphotographs are excellent. There is a wealth of references, many to Hirano. All neuropathologists and many others occupied with the nervous system and its various manifestations will enjoy and appreciate the book.

I JANOTA

The Human Brain. An Introduction to its Functional Anatomy. By John Nolte. (Pp 322; £14.00.) CV Mosby Company, 1981.

This is a fairly simple, and at £14 in the UK in August 1982, a relatively cheap introduction to the nervous system. The emphasis is on the brain and on the spinal cord, and the photographs of dissections or cuts in various planes, are good. Some of the figures are from older books, often because they have proven their worth; there are for example, very nice drawings (1946) of the details of the ear. The diagrams, many not original, are clear, and everything is well labelled.

One might be put off "Arachnoid trabeculae presumably serve to help the brain suspended within the meninges, much the way the Lilliputans stabilised Gulliver's position". "I thank Dr Theodore J Tarby for the analogy". Hm! or, "Thus, a brain weighing 1500 grams in air effectively weighs less than 50 grams in its normal cerebrospinal fluid environment"!! The most objectionable one of that sort, is about the spinal cord: "It weighs about 35 g, so one could be mailed for just two stamps." That stamps the book as American; whatever the value, the cost will be different in the UK or in different parts of Europe, but that is not neuroanatomy.

Some beautiful scanning electron microscope pictures well supplement the diagrams: they come from animals of course.

The book will serve its purpose: hopefully it will stimulate people to look at the brain, and to think and read about it. That is what an introduction ought to be about.

IVAN JANOTA

Neurological Evaluation of the Psychogenic Patient. Edited by W Lynn Smith, Michael H Hitchcock and Lavar G Best. (Pp 134; £10.25.) Lancaster: MTP Press Ltd, 1982.

A survey conducted in the library of the Institute of Psychiatry revealed that only one of twelve British psychiatrists had the faintest idea, from the title, what this book was mainly about—disease states of non-organic origin. Suggestions included the psychiatry of geriatrics, the neurology of madness, and the problem of being born daft. This is a pity because the book is very well written and gives a valuable account of the examination of patients with functional, hysterical, or more fashionably, conversion disorders. Most of the 10 authors come from Denver, Colorado and the text largely follows conventional teaching. There is just the occasional hint of low moral fibre (Lord Brain on ice cold water douches to terminate a fit) and rare excursions are made into tea-leaf psychiatry (the use of Rorschach blots to study personality changes, upheaval, victimisation and hysterical attributes). There is a wonderful chapter on clinical examination for functional eye disease, and the literature on hysteria is enhanced by the James test for a gaze palsy, the sudden display of a 20-dollar bill in the appropriate area. Throughout all of this we must remember that Freud had above his desk in Vienna a picture of one of Charcot's so-called hysterical patients, one of the classic illustrations of torsion dystonia; and that blepharospasm, facial tics and sudden aphonia are more likely to be organic or due to neuroleptic drugs than be the result of any kind of personality disorder. At least eighteen ways are given to distinguish between organic and non-organic symptoms by sensory examination, which if carried through in detail would be a sure way of confirming the examiner's prejudices but not of determining the truth. Despite these cavils, this short book is a

useful summary of present concepts of hysteria. At 13 pages a £1 it is not value for money.

JD PARKES

Neuroreceptors Basic and Clinical Aspects. Edited by Earl Usdin, William E Bunney Jr and John M Davis. (Pp 279; £21.50.) Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 1981.

As the title of this volume would suggest the contents are derived from sessions held at the American College of Neuropsychopharmacology in December 1979. The editors are at pains to point out that this volume is not the proceedings of that meeting but represents the expanded contributions of authors who presented at sessions on Receptor Plasticity: Biochemical and Pharmacological Correlates and on Pre- and Post-synaptic Receptors: Clinical and Basic Aspects. Each of these topics is diverse in its own right; this is reflected in the varied content of the book. However, two main themes are evident. Firstly, there is an extensive discussion of the adaptive changes in both noradrenergic and 5HT function which occur in response to the repeated administration of antidepressant drugs. There is general agreement that such changes may more closely reflect the mode of action of antidepressant drugs than the acute actions of such compounds. There is, however, considerable repetition of data between the various chapters since individual authors seem to have adopted similar approaches to the investigation of this problem. Secondly, there are four chapters devoted to radioreceptor assays for determination of levels of psychotropic drugs in plasma. These chapters provide an interesting current analysis of the use of such assays but again there is much repetition between the chapters which could possibly have been avoided. Interspersed among the two main sections are a number of other chapters which each deals with an individual topic in isolation. For example, the book is prefaced by a chapter on peripheral α -adrenergic receptor sub-types, a chapter on the GABA receptor complex is to be found in the middle of the four chapters on radioreceptor assays. Tamminga has contributed to a chapter on tardive dyskinesia in relation to different classes of dopamine receptor but this work is dated by the concept of

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receptor multiplicity proposed. Perhaps the most novel and most interesting of the chapters contained in this volume are the small mainly philosophical works included throughout the volume which deal with future approaches and strategies to research in the central nervous system. Although short, the views expressed by Costa, Carlsson, Bunney and Bloom give considerable insight into the direction that research might take and the problems it will face in future.

In conclusion, a patchy book not dealing with any subject in particular, but which will no doubt find its place on many library shelves.

PETER JENNER

Genetic Basis of the Epilepsies. Edited by V Elving Anderson and W Allen Hauser. (Pp 396; \$59.84.) New York: Raven Press, 1982.

This is the best account to date of the genetics of epilepsy. It developed from a symposium held in Minnesota which was intended to stimulate collaborative research between clinicians, whose prime responsibility must be to evaluate patients, and geneticists, biologists and epidemiologists who need to consider the difficult methodology of polygenic inheritance.

For those clinicians who seek the recurrence risks for various types of epilepsy, this book will probably provide an answer but only after a diligent search. One is left with the difficulty of assessing whether the risk is appropriate to the patient under consideration and there is no mention of the additional risks caused by anticonvulsant medication. The best clinical chapters are those by Dooze on photogenic epilepsy, Tsuboi on febrile convulsions and Annegers and Janz, with co-workers, on generalised seizures. Neonates and adolescents are equally well catered for. These authors give comprehensive and authoritative accounts which most neurologists will find useful. The chapter on family studies of epilepsy by Anderson, puts the data into perspective and highlights the pitfalls of interpretation.

A good deal of the book is concerned with a discussion of alternative genetic models, twin studies and other basic considerations of interest, mainly, to research workers but rather heavy going for the neurologist. Even if there is only time for a rapid perusal of the book it is hoped that the small subsection on "kifafa", which describes a

Tanzanian isolate with epilepsy provoked by photic stimulation, and the splendidly humorous chapter by Murphy, entitled "muddling, meddling and modelling" will catch the eye. A more prolonged perusal is of course recommended.

M BARAITSER

Shunts and Problems in Shunts. Vol. 8 of Monographs in Neural Sciences. Edited by M Choux. (Pp 230; SFr 115, DM 138, \$69.00.) Basel: S Karger AG, 1982.

This volume contains the collected papers presented at a Symposium on Shunts and Problems in Shunts held in Marseilles in June 1980, 25 years after the first use of valves in the treatment of ventricular dilatation. Almost every aspect of problems connected with the removal of cerebrospinal fluid has been covered and, fortunately or unfortunately, there have not been so many advances in the last two years that the papers have become outdated. Naturally, some are more informative than others, but the standard is generally high and there is something to be learnt from this material by everyone involved in the management of hydrocephalus. Unfortunately, there is no index, which reduces the value of the book as a source of reference.

As Dr Rougerie says in his preface, it is important not to regard the insertion of a shunt as a minor or routine procedure. One must be aware of the risks and complications that may follow a decision to operate, and to consider the type of procedure and the form of shunt which is suitable for each individual. The range of problems in the management of shunts seems to become greater rather than smaller with the passage of time, but infection remains the major one. Computed tomography has helped in the evaluation of shunt function and dependency, but there is still room for improvement in the functional assessment of these systems, particularly in relation to pressure measurement and cerebrospinal fluid flow.

The book is well produced with clear tables and illustrations, and there is no better source for information on this subject than this volume. It should be available, not only to paediatricians and neurosurgeons, but also to neurologists and general paediatric surgeons—indeed to all those who are concerned with the management of cerebrospinal fluid shunts.

PETER H SCHURR

The Aging Brain: Cellular and Molecular Mechanisms of Aging in the Nervous System Vol 20 of Aging. Edited by Ezio Giacobini, Guido Filogamo, Giacomo Giacobini and Antonia Vernadakis. (Pp 304; \$45.56.) New York: Raven Press, 1982.

This book forms volume 20 in the Raven Press Series on aging; it attempts to analyse the aging processes in the nervous system at molecular and cellular levels. While this is a commendable aim it will be clear to readers that this is, at present, an unattainable prospect. The book is divided into six sections consisting of 25 chapters. The first part relates to cellular mechanisms of aging in the nervous system. There are interesting accounts of the role of glial cells in CNS aging, of changes in messenger RNA, of trophic factors in the retina, and of modifications in the muscle of the iris, in various species. Aging phenomena in membranes and in the cyto-skeleton, including the filamentous proteins of the neurons, occupy four subsequent chapters and the third section is concerned with evidence for age effects in neuro-transmitter systems. This section contains data on the human brain from Bowen's laboratory in London. Receptor mechanisms themselves received attention, particularly in relation to cholinergic, dopaminergic, opiate, and GABA receptor functions. The final two parts of the book are concerned with clinical correlates of brain aging in man, both in relation to neurofibrillary changes and cholinergic receptors. There is an interesting and important chapter in pyruvate dehydrogenase complex and its possible relation to choline acetyl transferase deficiency in dementia.

This book is very much a research monograph. It has, clearly, been produced rapidly, and suffers from its presentation having been printed direct from typescript of varying characters. It will be useful to research workers, but not to clinicians.

MICHAEL SWASH