

whose lengths vary with the amount of information available under each chapter heading and in this respect the book is well proportioned. One page on the radiology of the condition is entirely sufficient, as are two pages on its psychology. By contrast, some 46 pages are devoted to a detailed morphological study of the muscle and peripheral nerve. They cover the history, clinical features, a tentative classification based on the author's experience, morphology, electrophysiology, radiology, psychology, biochemistry, immunology, and so forth.

This book summarises very adequately and comprehensively the profusion of recent reports on the spinal muscular atrophies, and it has not suffered in translation. I consider it essential reading for all who are interested in this group of conditions.

J. P. BALLANTYNE

**Nerve-Muscle Interaction** By G. Vrbová, T. Gordon, and R. Jones. (Pp. 233; illustrated; £15.00.) Chapman and Hall: London. 1978.

This well-written book has arrived at a most opportune time. Nerve and muscle research is one of the most active aspects of the neurosciences, and the influence of nerve on muscle and vice versa is increasingly attracting the interest of research workers. There is a very considerable literature on this subject, and in this book the authors have summarised the current knowledge and hypotheses in this field. It deals with embryology of nerve and muscle, developmental anatomy and physiology of motor nerves, neuromuscular junctions, and muscle fibres. Later chapters deal with the effects of denervation on muscle, the mechanisms of reinnervation and plasticity in the neuromuscular system. This volume is not simply a catalogue of present knowledge. The authors continually question and offer hypotheses for various published observations. Our understanding of nerve-muscle interactions is heavily weighted on the side of the trophic influence of nerve on muscle and little is known of how or in what way muscle itself influences the motor nerve cell and its axon.

This book, I am sure, will have a wide interdisciplinary appeal in the neurosciences and can be unreservedly recommended.

J. P. BALLANTYNE

**Dyslexia: An Appraisal of Current Knowledge** Edited by Arthur L. Benton and David Pearl. (Pp. 544; £15.00.) Oxford University Press: New York. 1978.

The publishers say that this book "provides a comprehensive, interdisciplinary and rigorously critical evaluation of current knowledge about dyslexic disorders", but that alone need not deter potential readers. It contains a number of papers given at a research conference sponsored by the National Institute of Mental Health in 1977. As such it is repetitive, contradictory, and of uneven quality. For those who are familiar with the background literature and the specialised terminology it provides a summary of today's conflicting theories and the data upon which they are based. There is a notable dissatisfaction with the definition of the term dyslexia and while most of the experts agree on its deficiencies, no generally acceptable alternative is proposed. Many of the widely held beliefs about the nature of dyslexia were the result of gifted intellectual deductions. These have not been borne out by research and while it is disconcerting to find that fundamental beliefs have been challenged, the very openness of the current approach offers new ways of thinking about the problem.

This is not a systematic account of reading difficulties with well argued conclusions but it is a stimulating and at the same time irritating summary of current ideas.

I. T. DRAPER

**Advances in Anatomy, Embryology and Cell Biology.** By D. G. Jones. (Pp. 69; illustrated; £9.00.) Springer-Verlag: Berlin, Heidelberg, New York. 1978.

This is an anatomical journal and, since it publishes commissioned review articles, the standard is extremely high. This issue is no exception and contains a summary of current knowledge of the presynaptic terminal, particularly the parasynaptic densities, the vesicle attachment sites, and the microtubular system. As is to be expected the articles are concerned mostly with morphology, but there are occasional references to other disciplines. Although this issue will be of interest to all neuroscientists it will be of particular value to the synaptologist.

S. GALBRAITH

**Tuberculous Meningitis: A Handbook for Clinicians** By Malcolm Parsons. (Pp. 55+21; £4.50.) Oxford University Press: Oxford. 1979.

This is a short account of the pathology, diagnosis, and treatment of tuberculous meningitis, with a useful review of drugs in the appendix. Clinical examination is briefly mentioned—too briefly to be of great help to the general physician and, perhaps more importantly, to his junior staff. Indeed, they would be better advised to consult some of the recent reviews of tuberculous meningitis cited by the author. The specialist may disagree with some of the author's views—for example, that both streptomycin and isoniazid should be given intrathecally—and would appreciate a more detailed review of the Oxford experience with PPD. In all, an uneven and unsatisfactory book, expensively priced at £4.50 for 55 octavo pages.

MYFANWY THOMAS

**Colour Vision: An Historical Introduction** By G. S. Wasserman. (Pp. 222; illustrated; £13.40.) John Wiley & Sons: New York. 1978.

The study of colour vision is an interdisciplinary one and many famous scientists and philosophers have contributed to it. It is, therefore, appointing that Professor Wasserman should have chosen for this review those writings which support an idiosyncratic approach to the subject. The book fails as an intended introduction to the subject for nonspecialists because it denies several basic principles, including trichromacy. Although brightness enhancement and early microspectrophotometric research are given detailed treatment, important recent work and the contribution made by densitometry and selective bleaching are ignored. The characteristics of defective colour vision are incorrectly stated. Great length is devoted to component, opponent, and zone theories of colour vision but how these are now linked to produce a composite framework for understanding colour vision processes is not clearly described.

JENNIFER BIRCH

**Atlas de Crisis Epilepticas** By L. Oller Daurella and L. Oller Ferrer-Vidal. (Pp. 322; price not stated.) Geigys, Divisi6n Farmac6utica: Barcelona. 1979.