booklet gives a clear and concise account of the problem, and the discussion and conclusions are of interest to all who are involved in the care of the chronically disabled.

INGRID V. ALLEN

Perceptions and Presentations By Keith Oatley. (Pp. 247; illustrated; £7.00.) Methuen: London. 1978. Although this book can be read as an interesting analysis of current theories and experiments in perception, it is very much more than that alone. The author has examined some of the fundamental problems in understanding the relationship between brain structure and psychological function, and his vehicle for doing this is the study of perception in which he draws attention to the often ignored yet still quite astonishing and theoretically tantalising ability of humans to make accurate perceptual judgments on the basis of the most fragmentary information.

There is a further and interesting theme to this book, as Dr Oatley gives a careful and critical account of the conceptual basis of current psychophysiology, and in so doing discusses the role of theory construction in guiding data interpretation, showing that interpretation of raw data can only proceed in the light of a current theory or hypotheses, which may well be implicit rather than explicit. He is much concerned with implicit models in psychophysiology, and he is very critical of the current S-R paradigm which in his view underlies much of current psychophysiological thinking, and which has not really changed since Descartes first suggested it as a mechanism of nerve function.

It is a little surprising that the book does not consider neuropsychological research, where the current models have often moved far away from Cartesian S-R psychology, to embody modern concepts of cognitive and engineering psychology. However, despite this, there is much in the book to interest scientists in psychological and physiological fields, and those with the philosophical bent will enjoy the discussion of the role of theory in data interpretation. It is a book to which one will almost certainly return, and although it is written as a highly integrated whole, each chapter can be read as a complete and stimulating unit. This is a most enjoyable book, and one that in these inflationary times would no longer be thought to be grossly expensive at £7.

D. NEIL BROOKS

Neurology of Childhood Learning Disorders Second edition By Richard J. Schain. (Pp. 156; illustrated; $14.95.) Williams and Wilkins: Baltimore. 1977. This book aims to aid the neurological consultant—paediatric neurologist—who attempts to deal with learning disorders in childhood. There is much wisdom in the book, but I cannot in honesty recommend it either to a general audience or specifically to British readers, unless the reader is prepared to be selective and strictly critical. Within this small book are beautiful discussions of the neurological examination, management, and the place of drug therapy. But interwoven in the text are errors of fact, as in descriptions of seizure types, failure to clarify the neurological distinctions between specific learning disorders (such as "developmental Gerstmann syndrome" and "developmental dyslexia"), an attempt to cover too much ground, and a distortion of emphasis (so that a masklike facies is suggestive of a postencephalitic state or Möbius syndrome, whereas in practice it is likely to be congenital myotonic dystrophy). Important omissions include the lack of mention of the need to measure parental head circumference when evaluating microcephaly or macrocephaly.

I am glad to have the book for its many good points, but if it should come to a third edition, a thorough pruning by a friendly but obsessiona1 paediatric neurologist might allow a wider recommendation.

J. B. P. STEPHENSON


This monograph is devoted to the "master monstrosity", the creation of a human without a brain. The authors suggest that, for reasons yet unknown, the rostral neural plate fails to close and thus the lesion originates in the first month of embryonic life.

After a historical introduction, anencephaly, both human and experimen-