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