paediatric neurologists. It is an unwise neurologist who neglects this aspect of his reading, not least because sooner or later a legal question regarding the behaviour of one of his patients will undoubtedly crop up. Good summaries of the long and tortuous literature of this subject are not easy to find and this little book provides value and easy access, despite some unevenness and gaps due to its method of gestation.

It is a product of the current vogue for setting up a conference to write a book, a technique which has resulted in some excellent productions. The editors not only invited specialists in epilepsy with a specific interest in cognitive function and behaviour, but also an audience to catalyse the chapters. In the main this has worked well but the editors acknowledge that it was not intended to be a complete manual of the cognitive and behavioural associations of epilepsy. The fourteen chapters are distributed rather unnecessarily in five sections with two or three chapters on methods of assessing cognition and behaviour in epileptics, on the relation between the EEG abnormalities and performance, on cognitive and educational aspects in children, on the effects of drugs and epilepsy on mood and memory and of the association between epilepsy and dementia. The offerings are concise, although there is a degree of overlap and repetition.

For such a common problem the authors' conclusions from reviewing the literature generally make for depressing reading. The numbers of epileptic cases in studies of cognition have been far too small, possibly unrepresentative and the results inconsistent. Too frequently studies have not been controlled, even for age, sex, education and IQ. The exception, the well-performed Veterans Study from Portland, to which one chapter is devoted, indicates the importance of well-designed multi-centre studies with strict entry criteria. However, in contrast to earlier reports, the performance of the epileptic group did not differ from the rest of the population and there were few meaningful differences in the performance of patients on different anticonvulsants.

Population-based studies are still needed to identify the small group of children whose cognitive performance deteriorates or who are underachieving, to elucidate the relationship between educational attainment and the interictal EEG and the role of parental attitudes.

A brief but provocative chapter on transient cognitive impairment by Binnie concludes that urgent research is needed to decide which, if any, patients with subclinical discharges should be treated. The findings

from depth electrode studies pertaining to behavioural changes in epileptics in relation to seizure discharges and type of epilepsy, are reviewed by Fenwick. The unreliability of the surface EEG for lateralisation is addressed and mention made (without detailed discussion or references) of the important problem of behavioural changes associated with seizures occurring only at depth, with no surface ictal EEG alterations. The final discussion at the end of the book ranges over diagnosis, treatment and even the definition of epilepsy in relation to depth discharges. However, for detailed information on surface negative seizures and behavioural change, the interested specialist will have to go elsewhere. The summaries of the effects of anticonvulsant drugs on memory and mood are useful, if rather short, for such important topics.

Although there is frequent reference to various studies of memory or cognition which utilized routine EEG methods, little of which is new, there is no discussion of recent research into the role of cognitive evoked potentials and the newer PET and SPECT imaging techniques in relation to behavioural aspects of epilepsy.

Despite the drawbacks and the cost, which must be rather excessive for a book of this type, this is a useful contribution to an important and common clinical subject and will be essential contemporary reading for anyone who carries out research, or treats or assesses epileptic patients.

LD BLUMHARDT

Neuropsychological treatment after brain injury. Edited by DAVID W ELLIS, ANNE-LISE CHRISTENSEN (Pp 420; £77.) KLUWER ACADEMIC PUBLISHERS GROUP, 1989.

Most neurologists and neuropsychologists give dynamic psychology a wide berth. A commonly held belief is that an organic "explanation" in some way invalidates the content and meaning of thought. Such a view of cerebral disorders is rejected by the editors of this book whose central concern is not cognitive and perceptual remedy as the title might suggest, but a psychotherapeutic approach to brain injury. The tone is first established by a chapter subtitled "psychiatric perspective". It describes a number of psychological (rather than medically psychiatric) issues and concludes that the ultimate goal of rehabilitation is "to re-establish a sense of self—an acceptable identity". The contributors assume that the behaviour of brain injured people is meaningful, and hence a legitimate focus for

structured therapy. This has important practical consequences, for example in the management of aggression. "Disinhibited" behaviour is often viewed as an embarrassing eruption from the Jacksonian underworld and as such devoid of content and meaning. Here, aggressive behaviour is regarded as meaningful in its social-psychological context.

There are difficulties in offering psychotherapy to brain injured patients. First, the efficacy of conventional psychotherapy is questionable even in intact people and one has to be sceptical about a case report which concludes that the subject was finally enabled through group therapy "to attain the minimum degree of acceptance of his disability and adaptability necessary to ensure his stable future adjustment". Secondly, there is a diagnostic problem: how do we distinguish psychological from neurobiological factors? A third problem relates to the cognitive demands of psychotherapy which requires patients to understand explicit psychological formulations about themselves, and to retain new patterns of thought and behaviour. How can a sense of "narrative" continuity be restored in amnesics? How does reduced insight—referred to here in terms of Goldstein's "abstract attitude"—affect therapy? Yet another problem is partly ethical, partly conceptual. In behaviourally disturbed patients there is surely a tension between psychotherapeutic and behaviourist methods of management. Can a person be a rat? Although one is left with an inevitable sense of philosophical and scientific dissatisfaction, the fact that such issues have surfaced is a strong recommendation for this book. It is surely true that the primary object of therapy in brain injury is a person, a Goldsteinian whole in whom the fundamental themes of individual and social psychology are represented.

The specifically neuropsychological assessment scheme is derived from Luria, and aims to facilitate a therapeutic re-integration based on the individual's needs. Unfortunately the description of Lurian assessment and treatment is insufficiently concrete. A fuller description would no doubt be found in Christensen's monograph. As with Jackson's ideas, one sometimes has the feeling that Luria's use of neurobiological language (efferents, afferents, levels, etc) has a partly metaphorical force—not so far removed from Freud's systematics, but not to be rejected for that reason alone. We certainly need a unifying vocabulary to describe brain injury and its effects. The old categories—psychiatry, behavioural neurology, psycho-

therapy and neuropsychology—are stretched to the limits.

CHRISTOPHER D WARD

Textbook of Pain—2nd Edition. Edited by PATRICK D WALL and RONALD MELZACK (Pp 1080; Illustrations 264; Price: £95.00.) Edinburgh: Churchill Livingstone, 1989.

In some ways this is an easy book to review, since it is undoubtedly the best currently available textbook on virtually all aspects of pain, ranging from laboratory and experimental aspects of nociception to clinical pain conditions and their medical, surgical and psychological management. Wall and Melzack in particular are to be congratulated on an outstanding editorial achievement, and the book in my opinion has no rival.

Appearing five years after the first edition, it is over 1000 pages long and weighs seven pounds. There are 111 contributors, and it is interesting that the editors appear to have let them deal with their subjects entirely in their own way and write in their own style. This has advantages and penalties. The advantages include a refreshing individuality, for instance Hannington-Kiff's anecdotal account of how he developed the technique of regional intravenous guanethidine infusion, and Sweet and Poletti who head a paragraph dealing with commissural myelotomy "Guesses concerning the mechanisms of relief". The disadvantages include considerable repetition (for example, acupuncture analgesia appears in two successive chapters, one on folk medicine and sensory modulation of pain and the succeeding chapter on acupuncture analgesia and therapy), the tendency for some authors to perhaps over-emphasise their own contributions, and great unevenness in presentation. For instance, the chapter on back pain deals with the subject in less than five pages of text, whereas (and perhaps significantly) the chapter on the failed back reviews the subject comprehensively and at double that length.

The editors have also clearly permitted authors to air their views with conviction but not necessarily objectively. Unqualified statements occasionally appear such as "Cervical spondylosis is best approached anteriorly with removal of the disc and fusion of the joint with bone graft." (p.808); many doctors will feel that the management of cervical spondylosis is more complex and less certain than that. Occasional spelling errors creep in, including Dejerine (p.166), Prinzmetal (p.413) and Gilliat (p.532). It is good to see a chapter on pain in children, but a pity not to see one on pain in the elderly.

Clinical neurologists will be disappointed to see little or no mention of certain pain problems which they encounter, such as pain in Parkinson's disease, dystonia, the restless legs syndrome, erythromelalgia, and "painful legs and moving toes". Some of these conditions are by no means rare, and discussion would be useful. The mechanism of the pain in the carpal syndrome (why does the pain extend as far as the shoulder in some patients?) and a more extensive consideration of referred pain and its mechanisms could also be included in the next edition.

These are relatively minor criticisms of a first class book which ranges widely over a broad subject. Presentation is excellent as is the index. It would be helpful to print in heavier type the key page number in the index when several page numbers are given for a specific subject.

In 1953, Bonica wrote single-handed his outstanding *The Management of Pain*, which comprehensively surveyed the subject at that time. There has been no worthy successor until now, and with the *Textbook of Pain*, those interested in the field will find an invaluable work at a very reasonable price.

GD SCHOTT

Advanced Evoked Potentials. Edited by Hans Lüders. (Pp 278; Dfl 200.00, \$85.00, £52.50.) Martinus Nijhoff Publishing (Kluwer Academic Publishers Group) 1989.

This book is a joy to read. At the top of my reasons for such a declaration comes the literary aspect of the book. Though the topics dealt with in this book are inherently highly technical, complex and new, the authors have managed to express the intricacies of the ideas involved in plain and clear English, resorting to the minimum, but necessary usage of jargons of the medium of electroneurophysiology. Hence, to tackle any of the ten chapters of this book, the reader does not need the ability to comprehend the surreal language of highly specialised scientific literature. However, expertise in the practice of clinical neurophysiology is essential before one attempts to read any part of the book. This book, as implied in its title, deals with evoked potential (EP) at an advanced level.

Each of the ten chapters is a critical essay of a dimension of EP studies, the author being an internationally recognised figure who has made a life long contribution to the topic of his critique. The first five chapters deal with what could be described as the scientific and technical basis of EP studies. Chapter one is a review of Near-Field, Far-Field Potential theories and its implication to the art of recording and interpretation of EP.

In the second chapter, the author discusses the strength and shortcomings of the diverse methods in use, and indeed necessary to identify generator sources of EP peaks and slopes. In the following three chapters, each author reviews and critically discusses the up-to-date methods used to record and localise sources of peaks and slopes of EPs, in the fields of Somatosensory Evoked Potential, Pattern Visual Evoked Potential and short latency auditory EPs. The five chapters together have a common trend of thought, reflecting a degree of consensus among the authors; yet within the common theme each author has managed to dent the consensus with his differing view about specific points. This level of disagreement by undermining the suffocating affect of consensus on scientific imagination is part of the appeal of a book dealing with advanced aspects of science. Each chapter has a comprehensive list of valuable references. I found these five chapters intellectually stimulating, provocative, "meaty" and for those of us submerged in daily duties of providing a medical service a "must" to read. Researchers in the field of neurophysiology would find "food for thought" within the lines of different chapters, especially if they are in the middle of working for a post graduate degree.

The second five chapters provide a critical up-to-date review of the role of evoked potential studies in the clinical practice of medicine in general and not only in relation to multiple sclerosis. These chapters are hard work as they deal with massive amounts of information generated by workers over the years of applying EP studies to every discipline of medicine. There is a chapter on coma and brain death that is very comprehensive, yet despite the wealth of information easy to digest. The chapter dealing with monitoring neural function during surgery is no more than an enumeration of techniques in use to date. I suppose it had to be written to provide a comprehensive cover of EP studies. However, chapter six would not have been missed if it had been dropped out of the book altogether. The author of this chapter appears to be expressing his misconceptions as to what practicing neurophysiologists think about the information they provide in the jig-saw of clinical diagnosis. I would imagine chapter six as a useful lecture to an audience with more simplistic notions of the role of EPs in patient management. Having said all that, perhaps the editor has met many over-enthusiastic workers in this field and finds it useful to inject some cynicism into the mind of such practitioners!

AAA BAJAL