The introductory chapter by R J Douglas sets out the view that the various properties of the visual world such as form, orientation, colour and movement are processed by separate cortical regions with the primary visual areas acting as an elementary detection and relay station. However there are differing views on how these regions are arranged. In the hierarchical model, based mainly on morphological studies of neural connections, visual stimuli are analysed for the various properties of form, colour and orientation by successive relay to specific regions at increasing distance from the calcareae. Dr Guberman proposes that there are major pathways one concerned with what a visual object is and the other where it is. The 'what' task is performed by the ventrally situated inferior temporal cortex and the 'where' task by the dorsally situated occipito-parietal cortex. This view is derived from behaviour experiments in animals and on the effects of brain lesions in man. A third view based on physiological recording from various points on the visual pathway proposes that visual information is divided from the retina onwards into two streams, a P (parvocellular) system thought to convey high acuity at high contrast and an M (magnocellular) system conveying low acuity visual information concerned with motion and depth perception. The first chapter discusses these pathways and the precise ocu-lomotor mechanisms necessary to maintain high quality retinal images of moving objects. There follow a series of chapters on various visual disorders in man including visual illusions and hallucinations, colour vision, prosopagnosia, Balint's syndrome, object agnosia and residual vision and blindsight. The chapter by Milders and Perrett on facial recognition and by Ruddock on acquired disorders of colour vision are particularly informative and comprehen-sive.

Considering the scope of the book and the different backgrounds and nationalities of the contributors the style is remarkably even. Illustrations are used sparingly, perhaps too sparingly, and the book compares unfavourably in this respect with the superbly illustrated accounts of visual physi-ology and psychology aimed at the general reader. References are comprehensive and up to date. Altogether this is a scholarly and stimulating book for neurologists interested in how the brain analyses the visual world (and that should include all of us).

R ROSS RUSSELL


Contemporary medical books may have two purposes. Either they can provide funda-mental instruction about the principles and practice of clinical medicine, or they may assemble and order factual knowledge for reference purposes. The huge growth in fact-ual data, especially in the area of imaging, has made it more difficult for popular and specialist books combine these roles. Dr Guberman's book is one of a dying breed which tries to serve both functions. I think it is pre-dominantly a textbook, as a textbook, it is a 254, Illustrated; Price: £75.00. Oxford, Blackwell Scientific Publications Ltd. ISBN 0-07-001020-X.

Stereotactic Radiosurgery has had an un-expectedly large influence on neurosurgical practice as Charles Wilson points out in his foreword to this excellent book on this sub-ject. As Radiosurgery in its various forms is used in many centres by doctors of widely differing experiences, it becomes more and more crucial that its use is securely based on sound principles of radiobiology and physics as well as of stereotaxy and neurosurgical practice. Its distinguished practitioners are respected exponents of the technique and well placed to give this volume authoritative accounts of the different characteristics of Gamma Knife, Linac, and Heavy Particle therapy, the principles involved as well as the results that can be achieved and pitfalls to be avoided. The range of conditions that have been treated by radiosurgery is wide but it is not panacea and its proper application requires careful selection and disciplined execution. This book offers a valuable sur-vey of the present situation as well as some provocative thoughts about what the future may hold for the method.

D M C FORSTER


This is another book targeted at the grow-ing market of clinical groups seeking educa-tion in the surgical treatment of epilepsy. It is a multi-author book divided into four sections. The first deals with prophylactic and is a helpful contribution; especially the chapter devoted to epileptic syndromes. The next section deals with preoperative evaluation and is reasonably comprehen-sive, although the separation of the chapters on basic neurophysiology and the Wada test by a chapter on preoperative psychiatric evaluation is bizarre. Unfortunately the chapter on surgical procedures is weak. Ten pages on cortical resections including tem-poral lobe resections is quite inadequate. The chapters on outcome are reasonable, although the one on reoperation presents only the editors' own series.

Much of the material in this book is from the editors' own writings, or those of their colleagues, and although much of it is valu-able, it does not constitute a good overview. As an introduction to the topic it is excel-lent, well produced and at a reasonable price, and as such would be a good intro-duktion for trainees in the appropriate neurosciences disciplines, and nursing and paramedical staff who wish to have a detailed account of these matters.

CE POLKEY

CORRECTION

Anderson, Milne. Management of central nervous system, Psychiatry 199536:1243-58 (Neurological emergency). The dosage of dexamethasone should be 0.15 mg/kg body weight every six hours for four days.

This correction was wrongly attributed to the editorial in the May issue.