

after a more generous account (he gives only half a dozen pages to psychiatric disorders); unfortunately this brevity is a realistic reflection of the paucity of well-conducted clinical research. The bibliography (953 references) and index are both excellent.

The book is highly recommended to anyone working with evoked potentials and should be available for perusal and reference to everyone interested in psychophysiology.

DAVID JULIER.

Event-Related Slow Potentials of the Brain: Their Relations to Behaviour. Edited by W. C. McCALLUM and J. R. KNOTT. Elsevier Scientific Publishing Company. 1973. Pp. xi+383. Index 5 pp. Price \$51.90.

Event-related Slow Potentials are changes in the electrical activity of the brain that may go on for several seconds after a stimulus or other recognizable neuropsychological activity. The term comprehends a number of changes of which by far the best known is that christened 'expectancy wave', more than ten years ago, by Grey Walter, and now usually known as 'contingent negative variation' (CNV). The present comprehensive volume is the report of an international conference held more than two years ago. There are sections on methodology, physiology and ontogenetic function and two sections of particular interest to psychiatrists; namely, behaviour and the clinical applications. There is finally a comprehensive bibliography of the many hundreds of papers that have been published on this particular aspect of electrophysiology of the brain in less than ten years.

The volume of work done attests the interest and importance of new methods of investigating electrical activity of the brain. The apparatus required is not expensive or sophisticated but differs significantly from conventional EEG recording, so that few laboratories are equipped to carry out the necessary observations except on a research basis. The development of a new investigatory technique from research to routine use will occur only if it can be shown to be of definite diagnostic or therapeutic value. The EEG itself would never have got beyond being a laboratory tool if its value in the diagnosis and management of epilepsy had not been early demonstrated.

As a research technique the study of the CNV continues to hold out great promise in the areas of attention and conation which have been singularly neglected in general psychology, in contrast to emotion and cognition. There is much of interest to the physiologically-minded psychiatrist in this volume, but it must be regretfully stated that nothing has yet emerged of definite clinical value in diagnosis or treatment. Nevertheless, any psychologist or psychi-

atrist interested in the interaction between mental and neural processes would be well advised to see if the kinds of techniques described in this volume might not be relevant to his projected research.

D. A. POND.

CHILDREN

Adaptive Learning: Behavior Modification with Children. Edited by BEATRICE A. ASHEM and ERNEST G. POSER. Oxford: Pergamon Press. 1973. Pp. xx+439. Price £6.50.

This is a reasonably well selected collection of reprints describing the application of behaviour modification techniques to children's disorders. Forty-one papers—two of them specially written for this volume—are grouped in four sections dealing with: I. Sub-optimal behaviours within the normal range; II. Emotionally disturbed children; III. Autism and retardation; IV. Training parents and others. The book has a brief introduction to the field, written by the editors, and a concluding section raising issues for further research.

The selection of papers illustrates desensitization and operant techniques with a variety of children's problems. However, the section on mental retardation ignores the important area of training in self-help skills. Another major omission is the lack of reference to the exciting work being done with aggressive and delinquent children and their families (e.g. Patterson, 1973; Phillips *et al.*, 1973).

The compendium would have been even more useful if some papers on methodological issues and attempts at evaluation had been included. Even so, it will prove valuable to those who wish to have their own copies of published papers.

REFERENCES

- PATTERSON, G. R. (1973) Reprogramming the families of aggressive boys. In *Behavior Modification in Education* (ed. Thoresen, C.). 72nd Yearbook, NSSE.
 PHILLIPS, E. L. *et al.* (1973) Achievement Place: Behavior shaping works for delinquents. *Psychology Today*.

WILLIAM YULE.

Children Under Stress. By SULA WOLFF. Penguin Books. 1973. Pp. 283. Price 50p.

In recent years there seems to have been a tendency to try to legislate out of existence the unpleasant and noxious influences to which mankind may be exposed; clearly a hopeless task whose attempt sometimes leads to worse consequences. Despite the lawmakers, illness, handicap, hospitalization, breakdown of marriages, unkindness, bereavement will continue, and the more exceptional they become the more stressful for the families and children involved and the more help