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Book Reviews

Methods of Neurochemistry. Vol. 5. Edited by Rainer Fried with eight contributors. Marcel Dekker, New York, N. Y. 1973. \$19.50.

If it weren't for the excellent review of the state of the art and future challenges of denervation and reinnervation studies to interested neurochemists or neurobiologists generally, volume 5 of "Methods of Neurochemistry" would be difficult to justify acquiring. E. Gutman's succinct presentation, marred only by the occasional lapse of editorial proofing and/or typographical accidents which appear elsewhere in the book as well, offers insights into areas unrelated to neuromuscular transmission specifically but relative generally to problems of molecular biology, ontogenesis and tropism, and relationships between intracellular transport and intercellular communication.

The only continuity evident in this volume is the short chapter by Sampson and coworkers on microtubules and microtubular proteins. Better editorial planning would have put this chapter (as well as the chapter on Culture of Nerve Tissue by J. F. Schneider, which appeared in volume 4) after the one by Guttman.

Although the chapter by Seiden on Behavioral Methods in Pharmacology is an excellent review on operant techniques and experimental design for studying drug-behavior interactions, it falls short of the mark for describing in detail how the disciplines of neurochemistry and behavioral pharmacology could shed more

light on the biochemical-cellular mechanism of action by which drugs modify mood and behavior. For this reason, it does not depart significantly from the chapter on Behavior Techniques by Simon and Freedman in volume 4. The same objection can be put forward regarding the chapter by Abdel-Latif on Ion Transport in Synaptosomes in that the chapter by Whittaker and Barker on Synaptosomes in volume 2 of "Methods of Neurochemistry" offers essentially the same methodological approaches.

Lastly and also leastly is the superficial overview of Prenatal Diagnosis of Genetic Disorders Leading to Mental Retardation. In the authors' (Melancon and Nadler) own words, "Hopefully, every laboratory and hospital will not attempt to duplicate facilities already available in trying to monitor 'high risk' pregnancies for rare biochemical disorders, but will send the appropriate material to nearby centers that have gained expertise with the particular disorder." These authors should have chosen one or two disorders and gone into greater details of methodologies and associated problems rather than attempted to cover the entire area in 42 pp. The reader does not feel comfortable with the bits and pieces and would be hard-pressed to even attempt to set up an experimental project for lack of specific information for doing so, which should be within a treatise on methods.

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