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### Book reviews

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*Mechanisms of Inorganic and Organometallic Reactions, Volume 1*; edited by M.V. Twigg; Plenum Press, New York and London, 1983, 373 pages, \$49.50

This book is the first volume in a new series intended to "provide a continuing critical review of literature dealing with mechanisms of inorganic and organometallic reactions in solution", and to some extent to replace the now defunct series entitled "Inorganic Reaction Mechanisms" which was published by the Royal Society of Chemistry. The volume covers the literature appearing in the period July 1979–December 1980, inclusive, and is divided into three main parts (with sub-sections), viz. Electron transfer reactions (A.G. Lappin and A. McAuley); Substitution and isolated reactions (M.N. Hughes, J.S. Coe, J. Burgess, P. Moore, and D.N. Hague); Reactions of organometallic compounds (M. Green, A.J. Deeming, L.A.P. Kane Maguire, and J.M. Davidson). (The last part is incorrectly titled; since it deals only with transition metal derivatives.)

I meet many organometallic chemists who very much like surveys of this type, and they will greatly welcome this one since the reviewers have done all that could be expected of them and the price of the book is remarkably low. I myself am very sceptical of the value of such compilations; for me, reviews of the annual survey type must either be very up-to-date or thoroughly comprehensive (so that it provides assistance in a literature search), or preferably both. I can see little value in a very restricted survey of 1979 and 1980 literature which appears in the second half of 1983. The impossibility of the task facing the reviewers is illustrated, perhaps at its most extreme, by the two pages, with 13 references, allowed for the mechanisms of reactions of all silicon compounds, which compares with the ca. 92 pages with ca. 400 references devoted to mechanisms of organosilicon reactions alone for a similar period in the *J. Organomet. Chem.* Library series of annual surveys of Si, Ge, Sn, and Pb. The more superficial surveys can even be harmful, since readers may wrongly believe they are keeping themselves informed on the major advances (of three years ago) in particular fields when what they are encountering are mentions of a few arbitrarily, and in some cases almost randomly, chosen papers.

I believe the very good people who wrote these surveys could have spent their time more fruitfully in other ways. But I suspect that many readers of this review will disagree with me, and that the sales of this book will be sufficient to ensure the appearance of future volumes in the series.

Plenum Press is to be congratulated once again for keeping the prices of its specialized publications so low.