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Book Review

BRAITENBERG, V. 1973. Gehirngespinnste. Neuroanatomie für kybernetisch Interessierte. Springer - Verlag, Berlin, Heidelberg, New York, 137 pages, 27 figures.

In this small book, an extensive area of knowledge is considered: the mechanism of reception and processing of information by the brain. The title means, literally, "The brain network. Neuroanatomy for persons interested in cybernetics". The author introduces the reader to the subject at an elementary and easily understood level, referring to daily experiences rather than to sophisticated scientific knowledge. Farther on, he ascends steeply to a level at which results and findings of recent investigations are discussed and hypotheses are put forward. He approaches neuroanatomy from various aspects so that a broad view is given of this field of science in relation to other areas such as psychology, physiology, histology, genetics and philosophy and their mutual uses and applications.

Although the main subject of the book is function of brains of vertebrates, some principles are elucidated by analyzing the nervous systems of invertebrates, especially those of houseflies.

Vision and perception of movement by these flies are discussed extensively, and this makes the book especially interesting to entomologists. Because this volume presents mostly the work and ideas of the author, it is not a text or reference work.

Henriette Reinouts van Haga.
Department of Entomology
University of Alberta
Edmonton, Alberta T6G 2E3 Canada