Preface: The Scientific Value of The Renshaw Cell Debate

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There are few moments in scientific history in which two contrasting views are ably expressed in successive presentations. But such was the case at the Cajal Club on March 31, 1970 during the Convention of the American Association of Anatomists in Chicago. WILLIAM D. WILLIS, Jr., on the one hand, and the SCHEIBELS, on the other, presented differing views on the Renshaw cell. Their views, refined and updated, are preserved for a wider scientific audience in the present number of *Brain, Behavior and Evolution*.

Several important Services were fulfilled by the contributors and the fulfillment will undoubtedly help shape future scientific efforts. The Services were: (1) to present the evidence for the development of the concept of the 'Renshaw cell' model of inhibition, (2) to present evidence which challenges the anatomical counterpart of the 'Renshaw cell' model, (3) to place in context the broader issue of the 'Renshaw cell' model as a theory of inhibition applicable throughout the central nervous System, (4) to focus on the distinction between data and interpretation of data, (5) to identify existing limitations in the methods used to obtain critical data, (6) to illustrate ways in which anatomical information can be used to evaluate fundamental hypotheses generated by physiological investigations, and, finally, (7) to indicate that if we hope to arrive at an improved understanding of nervous system structure and function, interactions such as the present one are needed in order to stimulate further thought and investigation which is designed to bring reliable anatomical and physiological information into closer relationship.

T. The contributors deserve our wholehearted appreciation for serving the scientific readership well in all seven of the above.

Walter Riss