

September 21, 1976

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Dear Ron,

First of all I should reveal, what you may have guessed, that I was the reviewer for "Science", who wrote the lengthier comments. I do not quite understand their policy of rejection since both reviewers recommended publication. At any rate, I went over the MS again and I found the paper interesting and well written and done with your usually careful and critical craftsmanship. But I think my suggestions for change are valid, particularly the "priority" issue and the length of the discussion.

I think Clarke and Cowan have proved beyond doubt that ION axons of cells which later die have reached the eye before death. I quote from their pp. 4456-57. "Following the injection into eyes , on the 11th and 12th days essentially all the cells in the contralateral ION are labelled. This establishes that prior to the onset of naturally occurring cell death, virtually all the neurons in the ION send their axons to the contralateral retina and that the later degeneration of more than half the cells cannot be attributed to the failure of their axons to reach the retina . . . it follows from our observations that the centrifugal axons have reached the retina." You cannot be more clear and specific. If "virtually all" neurons of the early stages are labelled, that is, perhaps 95%, then you don't need all counts. Therefore I think your statement at the bottom of p.8: "not previously been directly demonstrated (but see ref. 23)" is somewhat misleading. I sponsored the Clarke-Cowan paper partly on the basis of the originality of this observation and partly because of the interesting observation of ectopic neuron connections. So you will understand that I could sponsor your paper only if you would be willing to make the change somewhat along the line of what I wrote at the bottom of page 3.

Concerning the discussion I suggested before in point 4 to shorten it. Altogether, your lengthy discussion of unresolved issues to which your data make no contribution would have been more appropriate for the readers of "Science" than for PNAS. I think the publications in PNAS

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should be--and most of them are-- very crisp and to the point, and sharply focused on original facts and concepts. For this reason, I find that the discussion from the middle of page 7 on should be omitted altogether, and the paper should end with the sentence marked on page 9. This would connect very well with the question mark sentence on page 7. And in this way the paper would conform more to the style of PNAS--I have also made some question marks on page 13.

Well, give the matter some thought and let me know whether under the circumstances you still want to have it submitted to PNAS. If you prefer to have the lengthier version published, perhaps the "short communications" in Brain Research would be the proper place. At any rate, I'll keep the original photos here until I hear from you again.

It was good to get at least a glimpse of your wife. I'll take the embryo to the Illustration Department some time this week. I hope you are not in a hurry; they are rather slow.

I read with great interest your diverse abstracts in the Neurosci. I don't think I'll go to Toronto since I have to give the Frank Schmitt lecture in Boston in October and I have another meeting in Boston in November.

All my best,

VK:im