

It estranged Lilienthal from his anti-war son for years thereafter, and added the father's name to the long list of liberal élitists and technocrats whose reputations never recovered from that débâcle.

By the time Lilienthal died, Americans' faith in unadulterated technological progress had faded and been replaced by scepticism and even pessimism about technology as panacea. In that respect, Lilienthal's increasing obscurity is not surprising. But Neuse describes a much more hopeful era with which to compare our own, and that is why his book is important and deserves a wide readership. □

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Darwin on the brain

Evolutionary Psychiatry: A New Beginning

by Anthony Stevens and John Price
Routledge: 1996. Pp. 267. £47.50, \$69.95 (hbk); £14.99, \$18.95 (pbk)

Steven Rose

Alas, poor Darwin! More idle speculation and dogmatic assertion have been published in your name in the past two decades than in the full preceding century, and still the torrent continues. Evolutionary biology spawns evolutionary psychology, sociology, medicine, economics, and now psychiatry.

That the human condition is the product of evolutionary processes involving natural selection is a truism to all biologists. That our diseases and disorders take the form they do as a result of these processes, embedded as they are within human history, culture and society, would scarcely seem a startling generalization, despite the wonder that such statements seem still to generate. But, as ever, the devil lies in the details, and in the evidential basis that could turn such broad claims into useful insights.

Anthony Stevens and John Price, respectively a Jungian analyst and a psychiatrist, begin their book with the grandest of claims for the revolution in understanding that they hope to provide — but they soon stumble. In fact the book turns out to be far more an attempt to vindicate Jung's theory of archetypes by linking it to Darwin on the one hand and John Bowlby on the other than one might have anticipated from the promissory note of its preface. It is written very much in the style of a teaching text, its pages spattered with bold type somewhat randomly indicating terms to be found in the glossary.

It whisks quickly through a classical introduction to the history of (non-biological) psychiatry towards a section bravely entitled "Human Nature: its Evolution and Development", which turns out to mean an uneasy conflation of Hal Waddington, Edward

Wilson and Bowlby. Unfortunately the authors' genetics and neurobiology get a bit shaky at this point. The human genome is defined as "our innate propensities," while Paul Maclean's outdated theory of the triune brain gets yet another airing, so that later in the book the authors can make much play with our "reptilian brain" whose "emanations" thoroughly condition "our drives, inner subjective feelings, fantasies and thoughts".

Stevens and Price begin with a refreshing attempt to transcend the dreary listing of psychiatric disorders provided by the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* (DSM) with its enthusiasm for the minute nosological classification best regarded as itself a sort of intellectual disorder (perhaps syndromitis?). Instead they argue — surely correctly — that psychiatric distress should be considered case by case rather than given Procrustean labels. They find it hard to maintain this position, though, and for a good portion of the latter part of the book even find themselves labelling chapter subheads according to DSM criteria — "Avoidant Personality Disorder" is "DSM301.82", for instance.

They then subject each such 'disorder' to a sociobiological analysis. This is based on the view that constraints of rank and spacing, arising during humanity's presumed

healthy Environment of Evolutionary Adaptedness (or EEA — this and other acronyms litter the text), generate the dysfunctions and psychic distress that permeate modern society. In this view, our ancestors may not have been Noble, but were at least Psychically Healthy Savages.

It is here that the authors' evolutionary and anthropological fantasies are given full rein. They argue that agoraphobia is commoner in women than in men because in the EEA men hunted while women stayed at home, so women became afraid to stray long distances without their men. Obsessive-compulsive disorder "probably arose in relation to the defence of resources... security arrangements had to be frequently and thoroughly checked... with wide genetic variation, and will still be under active selection". Homosexuality may be a kin-selection adaptation by which childless gays invest more in the care of their relatives' offspring. Recognizing that this suggestion, originally made by Wilson, has no current empirical base, the authors maintain nonetheless that it would have been a necessary condition of survival "in the ancestral environment". And even today "wealthy homosexuals sometimes shock their friends by leaving the bulk of their estate... to some nephew or niece whom they may not have seen for years".

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Transaction Publishers, \$21.95, £14.95

This is a revised and expanded edition. "It must be said that autobiography is not Eysenck's natural *métier*. Perhaps because it is the least intellectually pugilistic, least controversial and tendentious, and most narrative of his works, it is less than gripping stuff. As a matter of record, it would have been a pity had it been left unwritten. But as an idiographic account of one man's life, which it explicitly sets out to be, it is disappointing." Steve Blinkhorn, *Nature* 344, 889 (1990).