

## BOOK REVIEW

**THE FUNDAMENTAL CONNECTION BETWEEN NATURE AND NURTURE.** Walter R. Grove and G. Russell Carpenter. Lexington. 1982. Pp. 312. Price \$21.00.

This book is intended mainly for social scientists and emphasizes the importance of biological processes in determining human behaviour, but the authors “think scholars with either a biological or a social science perspective would benefit from an acquaintance with the materials in this book”. As a geneticist primarily concerned with human behaviour, I had hoped that there was no necessity for another book trying to show that human behaviour can only be fully understood in terms of man’s biology, psychology and social systems. However, in their introduction, the editors convinced me that the volume is needed. Most social scientists apparently believe the mind and body are separate, the body coming within the province of biology and the mind within that of sociology; they have an “anti-biological bias” which the editors are seeking to change. This book could contribute to a change in attitudes if antibiological social scientists read it; they may be encouraged to do so, since both authors are sociologists.

The editors’ introductory critique of the social sciences as stagnating and ‘fragmented, atheoretical disciplines whose work is often methodologically unsound, although often “sophisticated”’ should dismay social scientists, whilst confirming the prejudices of many a biologist. They believe that there is good work in the social sciences, but it is scattered and specialised. The editors are calling for a central unifying theory to provide a conceptual framework for research, which would have the same stimulating effect that the theory of evolution had for biology. They do not find their lead coming from sociologists and look instead to the biological sciences. They reject sociobiology in its present form because it concentrates only on distal causes. Feldman and Cavalli-Sforza provide a useful critique of sociobiology and outline a methodological framework for testing models of cultural change. Their chapter comes closest to providing the general theoretical foundation the editors are looking for. Taubman’s modelling of the biological and social determinants of earned income also provides a general methodology which could be applied throughout the social sciences.

These two chapters, perhaps, go beyond the editor’s justification for the book as an attempt to convince social scientists that human behaviour is a “biopsychosocial phenomenon” which cannot be understood without reference to biological and psychological processes. It seems that still ‘for most sociologists, persons are “completely molded by the particular norms and values of their culture”’. The chapters by Kidd and Cortez contradict this assumption by demonstrating that some individuals deviate markedly from the norms and values of society, displaying behavioural disorders and criminal behaviour. Cortez’s treatment of criminality lacks rigour, selecting data to support the importance of bodily physique and disregarding statistical problems: “I grant that the size of our samples was not ideal. Nevertheless, in my opinion it is a secondary matter”. Kidd provides a valuable

analysis of the familial transmission of behavioural disorders, spoiled only at the end by his failure to consider the polygenic threshold model as a possible mechanism for the transmission.

The remaining contributions certainly provide empirical evidence for the importance of both biological and social/psychological factors in pain perception, disease, mortality and morbidity, sexually dimorphic behaviour, earned income, delinquency and crime and behavioural disorders. The diversity in content and uneven quality of the chapters makes the book fragmentary, much like the sociology described by the editors. This is not to decry many of the contributions, which are comprehensive and competent reviews of an area. However, I thought some attempt at integration of the subject matter other than the cursory chapter outlines in the introduction should have been made by the editors, since there are persistent themes running through the contributions.

Several authors believe that "cross-cultural universals" are important in determining which behaviours are innate. But behaviours common to all cultures are not necessarily innate and even when they are, they are probably of little interest. The challenge is understanding individual differences in behaviour and inequalities in society.

Another recurrent theme is the effect on its own genetic structure of changes brought about by society in the fitness of its members, which is emphasized by the editors in their final chapter. Klerman and Schechter's contribution on psychopharmacology provides a good illustration.

Many contributions show how the use of a particular biological difference can be used to provide appropriate controls, giving power to the analysis of social and psychological causes. Abnormalities and sexual dimorphism are used as models to provide clear answers in complex systems. The importance of age and sex as controls is recognised by several contributors and the editors conclude by suggesting that studying age differences may provide a general method for understanding sociological phenomena.

K. A. LAST

*Department of Genetics, University of Birmingham*