12-1-1979

Book Review of "The Little Universe of Man" by C. D. Darlington

Carl J. Bajema
Grand Valley State University, bajemacarl@comcast.net

current fashion, such as a rather mistitled discussion of "androgyny," are justifiable.

A book on sex must of course be accurate. Beyond that, two related questions have to be answered: are unusual forms of behavior per se abnormal; and how are studies of behavior related to human ethology? The second is the key to the first, because unusual behaviors are more easily made comprehensible in ethological terms than in psychoanalytic ones. It is a part of their ethology that they are in fact "overdetermined," but this can come out in the telling.

Hyde scores a B+ in answering these questions. She deals reasonably with homosexuality (though this attitude is now fashionable, it also happens to be correct) but misses its evolutionary relation to bonding and dominance. She also perpetuates the fashionable but incorrect idea that there are homosexual *people* (and hence two kinds of human beings) rather than homosexual *behaviors*. Her discussion of the less newsworthy and less conventional behaviors is far more routine. Starting with Boss's rather clumsy definition of normality, she repeats the standard textbook classification, which provides self-adhesive labels that will worry readers, with little hint that "there are no perverse behaviors, only perverse people" (A. Maslow, *J. Soc. Psychol.*, 16:259, 1942). And, of course, we must recognize unacceptable or intolerable behaviors ranging from rape to grossly inconsiderate conduct, not all of which are identifiably unusual in form. She could have used compulsiveness, stereotypy, and anxiety as touchstones for dysfunctional behavior. She could have stressed the heavily overdetermined character of unusual sex preferences, in which play and magic figure along with anxiety; the use of enacted transitional objects (sexual teddy bears); the displacement of sexuality, which may be one of its evolved functions in all mammals; and the $64,000 question: what does this particular behavior mean to this particular person — is it a help or a disability? An approach like this is almost mandatory if education is to correct the effects of Krafft-Ebing and tunnel-vision psychoanalytic sexology. By declining combat on topics like "sadomasochism" and repeating what the literature says, the book fails to address the actual sexual experience of its readers.

But the plusses in other areas are great. The brevity of the author's style, the use of techniques drawn from the *Whole Earth Catalog*, and plentiful but never meretricious illustrations make the book readable even to the nonreaders emerging from the modern American educational system. It is the first book of its kind by a woman, and female experience is actually represented, not stereotyped or hopefully fantasized. Ethology could have helped here — feminists have been slow to interpret erection as a dominance-behavior and so to explain some of the socially less pleasing characteristics of primate males. This insight might make it easier for male readers to stop turning off themselves or their partners.

It is pleasant in this heavily mined area to congratulate an author on a book that is accurate, unprejudiced, well researched, reassuring without fatuous acceptance of unacceptable or irresponsible behavior, and virtually certain to educate many and harm nobody.

ALEX COMFORT, *Consultant, Psychiatry, Brentwood Veteran's Administration Hospital, Los Angeles*

HUMAN OOCYTES AND THEIR CHROMOSOMES: AN ATLAS.

By B.-M. Uebele-Kallhardt in cooperation with T. Trautmann; Foreword by K. Benirschke. Springer-Verlag, Berlin and New York. $26.40. ix + 106 p.; ill.; subject index. 1978.

These 72 light micrographs show first meiotic prophase in 18-week to 27-week fetal ovaries and first and second meiotic divisions in ovaries of adults. The appearance and arrangement of chromosomes are emphasized in most of the pictures. Selected references are provided.

THE LITTLE UNIVERSE OF MAN.

By C. D. Darlington. George Allen & Unwin, London and Boston. $19.95. 307 p.; ill.; index. 1978.

Darlington attempts to show how evolutionary processes operating during the past 300 years have produced a network of interdependent societies whose problems of population, migration, production, and consumption have become worldwide and thereby have made man's little universe unmistakably one.

While his review of human history is interesting, Darlington fails miserably with respect to his stated objective: "to explain how we may sort out, from the new knowledge that continually comes to us, what will help us and what may hinder or even destroy us" (preface). Darlington's vague statements about the importance of natural selection in past and present human evolution provide a very inadequate picture of current selection theory and of the theory's relevance to the modern human predicament. Darlington does not discuss how sociobiologists have used the theory of inclusive fitness to transform natural selection from a principle of minimal survival to a principle of maximal reproduction. This transformation greatly increases the predictive power of selection theory with respect to the ecology and evolution of human social behavior. He does not utilize modern sociobiological theories of selection to interpret past and present evolution of human populations. Individuals wishing to learn how selection theory can clarify and solve the intertwined problems of population growth, resource depletion, and pollution will find Garrett Hardin's six-page essay, "The Tragedy

of the Commons" (1968) far more profitable than the 307 pages of *The Little Universe of Man*.

CARL JAY BAJEMA, *Biology, Grand Valley State Colleges, Allendale, Michigan*

HUMAN EVOLUTION. *Outline Studies in Biology. A Halsted Press Book.*

By B. A. Wood; Series Editor: J. M. Ashworth. Chapman and Hall, London; John Wiley & Sons, New York. $3.95 (paper). 80 p.; ill.; index. 1978.

The "Outline Studies in Biology" are described by the Series Editor as "guidebooks not textbooks." Each book is intended to provide a short outline for readers possessing a basic knowledge of biology but needing an authoritative outline of the subject that will enable them to read scholarly reviews with profit. To meet such demands in 80 pages is nearly impossible, but Wood has done it well — although condensation had some impact on clarity and balance.

This book has seven chapters. The introduction outlines the scientific basis or "ground rules" of the discipline. Dating methods are well summarized, but the biologically trained reader might need more on stratigraphic methods if he is to understand the problems of temporal placement and the resulting difficulties of interpretation. The chapter on human origins has a very useful hypothetical phylogenetic tree leading to fossil hominids. More could profitably have been said about the *Dryopithecus* complex. The review of the australopithecines is well balanced and objective, perhaps the best brief review to date. The author's knowledge makes valuable the chapter on the earliest evidence of *Homo*, although the discussion of the dating of the "1470" skull leaves the erroneous impression that the possible error ranges from 3.1 m.y. to 1.6 m.y. Mention of the Hadar and Laetolil fossils is useful, and the diagram of alternative phylogenetic schemes will enable the reader to appreciate Johanson's recent, somewhat controversial interpretation of "Lucy." *Homo erectus* is carefully evaluated, and the Neanderthal problem is outlined thoughtfully. It is not clear why a figure about glacial chronology should appear suddenly at this point; glacial and interglacial periods are mentioned earlier. The final chapter, "Evidence of Modern Man," suffers from over-abridgement.

There are few typographical errors but too many grammatical ones. Additional punctuation might improve the intelligibility of sentences that appear to have been over-compressed. But these are minor defects in a valuable volume that should be read by specialists to restore their balance and by the readers for whom it was intended. At the price it is a rare bargain.

H. B. S. COOKE, *Geology, Dalhousie University*

THE FOSSIL EVIDENCE FOR HUMAN EVOLUTION. *An Introduction to the Study of Paleoanthropology. Third Edition, Revised and Enlarged by Bernard G. Campbell.*

By W. E. LeGros Clark. The University of Chicago Press, Chicago. $4.95. xvi + 231 p.; ill.; index. 1978.

The first two editions of this book are classics and this third edition is indeed welcome. The treat is especially rich because of the author chosen to do the revision for the late LeGros Clark: Bernard Campbell writes beautifully and is well informed on human evolution.

The first part of the book on principles of human evolution is changed very little from the earlier editions. This is followed by a section on *Homo sapiens* which adds more recent finds, particularly those outside of Europe and the Middle East. Most of the rewriting is in the second half of the book with additions of *H. habilis* to the *H. erectus* chapter, many useful new charts and drawings, an important new definition of *H. habilis,* addition of new australopithecine material, and a more expanded treatment of *Ramapithecus.*

This new edition re-establishes the book as the best source for a brief, inexpensive, up-to-date, authoritative treatment of the fossil evidence for human evolution. The book is not intended to present all the evidence for human evolution, of course, so that other sources must be consulted for information on archeology, the comparative anatomy of soft parts, molecular evolution, and numerous other lines of evidence that go into the emerging field of paleoanthropology.

HENRY M. MCHENRY, *Anthropology, University of California, Davis*

KOOBI FORA RESEARCH PROJECT. *Volume 1: The Fossil Hominids and an Introduction to Their Context, 1968-1974.*

Edited by Meave G. Leakey and Richard E. Leakey. Clarendon Press (Oxford University Press), Oxford and New York. $37.50. xvi + 191 p.; ill.; index. 1978.

Few fields of science have advanced as rapidly as paleoanthropology in the past ten years. Research at Koobi Fora or "East Rudolf" in northern Kenya has been central to this advance, contributing an abundance of cranial and postcranial remains of Plio-Pleistocene Hominidae. Most importantly, these new finds are from a stratified context permitting them to be dated relative to each other and, in some cases, radiometrically as well. A principal result of research at Koobi Fora has been clear demonstration that a minimum of two distinct hominid lineages coexisted in East Africa during the early Pleistocene, one leading to modern humans while the more robust lineage became extinct.

This book, the first in a planned series, includes an introductory chapter by project director, R. E. Leakey, outlining the history of the project and giving