



Sexual Nature/Sexual Culture.

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ments. The difference between dogma and scientific theory is that dogma is presented for acceptance without recourse to evidence, whereas scientific theory demands corroboration or falsification by evidence. It is dogma to say, for example, that because switching from the laboratory to the field succeeded this time that it will the next, or that the experimental manipulation of hormones to study behavior is wrong, in principle. Much excellent research in biology shows that the interplay between laboratory and field research makes great science, and that the experimental use of hormones can tell us much about behavior.

But do not be put off by the superficial flaws. Buy the book and learn from it.

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HUMAN BIOLOGY & HEALTH

PHYSICAL ATTRACTIVENESS AND THE THEORY OF SEXUAL SELECTION: RESULTS FROM FIVE POPULATIONS. *Museum of Anthropology, University of Michigan, Volume 90.*

By Doug Jones; Foreword by Donald Symons. Ann Arbor (Michigan): Museum of Anthropology Publications (University of Michigan). Price is not available (paper). xiv + 174 p; ill.; no index. ISBN: 0-915703-40-8. 1996.

Sexual selection theory has been avidly applied to the study of physical attractiveness in a wide range of species, but *Homo sapiens* has been largely ignored. This book does an excellent job of probing this underexplored niche. From the point of view of theoretical and methodological rigor, it ranks among the best empirical books on human behavior from an evolutionary perspective. The writing style is fluid and straightforward, and Jones commands an interesting reservoir of observations and quotes.

Chapters 1 and 2 review the literature on physical attractiveness research in humans and sexual selection theory. The remaining five chapters report the methods and results of Jones' research on standards of attractiveness in five populations: Brazilians, U.S. Americans, Russians, and Ache and Hiwi Indians of Paraguay and Venezuela. The principal data base includes photographs of individuals and interviews in which subjects rated the attractiveness of members of both their own population and members of the other populations. Jones also collected anthropometric measurements and determined the positions of facial landmarks.

When Westerners rated other Westerners, the av-

erage correlation coefficient for the ratings was 0.64, indicating considerable agreement on standards of attractiveness. Significant agreement emerged even between Westerners and non-Westerners. To explain the ratings, Jones carefully tests several hypotheses, including attraction to: age related cues of high fecundity, supernormal stimuli, neoteny in the facial proportions of females versus males, symmetry, and average versus exceptional features. He also considers cultural variation and the role of race and somatic prejudice in defining standards of attractiveness.

It is best left to readers to discover which of the hypotheses were supported, but I will note a few of the intriguing details. The attractiveness ratings of women declined by roughly 0.05 standard deviations per year, whereas those of men declined by 0.03 standard deviations per year. U.S. Americans rated blonde women 0.64 standard deviations more attractive than other women in the U.S., whereas blonde men were rated 0.79 standard deviations less attractive than other men. When the raters were Ache, however, this preference disappeared. Cultural variation in erotic focus is considerable. For example, when confronted with a range of choices: Brazilians preferred women with the smallest breasts and the largest buttocks and thighs; U.S. Americans preferred the largest breasts and the smallest buttocks. The male physique, regrettably, was not subjected to a similar analysis.

This book successfully conjoins the study of physical attractiveness in humans and sexual selection theory. I highly recommend it to researchers in either field. Because of its scientific rigor, it is a "must read" for evolutionary psychologists. Finally, this book provides an excellent introduction to evolutionary thinking for social scientists.

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SEXUAL NATURE/SEXUAL CULTURE. *Chicago Series on Sexuality, History, and Society.*

Edited by Paul R Abramson and Steven D Pinkerton. Chicago (Illinois): The University of Chicago Press. \$65.00 (hardcover); \$19.95 (paper). xvii + 416 p; ill.; index. ISBN: 0-226-00181-4 (hc); 0-226-00182-2 (pb). 1995.

This edited book is based on a symposium held in Portugal in 1993. The goal was to facilitate the conceptualization of human sexuality, broadly conceived, with input from a variety of disciplines. The disciplines represented include anthropology, psychology, evolutionary psychology, sociology, primatology, philosophy, developmental genetics, history, operations research, and endocrinology; anthropology and sociology are overrepresented, accounting for roughly half of the contributions. Overall,

the book is a gem, containing a fascinating collage of theories, findings and perspectives on human sexuality.

Biologists will be most interested in the first two parts on evolutionary origins, and biology and behavior. The chapter by Donald Symons, entitled *Beauty is in the adaptations of the beholder*, is brilliant; it is the best thing that has ever been written on the evolution of standards of attractiveness. Also fascinating are chapters by Mary McDonald Pavelka on cross-species comparisons of sexuality, a dazzling chapter by Kim Wallen on the evolution of female sexual desire, and a high quality contribution by Frans de Waal on bonobo sexuality.

Biologists who study sexuality, however, would profit from reading the entire book. Although hard-nosed scientists may scoff at the case-study method, we found the discussion of sexuality among the Mehinaku Indians of Brazil by Thomas Gregor and the Tai sex trade by Lenore Manderson to be fascinating and worth reading.

Given the admirable, but difficult, ambition of theoretical synthesis of diverse perspectives on human sexuality, this book did not reach its goal. A pervasive theme was a rift between those who view evolutionary biology as essential for the study of human sexuality, and those who oppose viewing humans in this light. Despite this conceptual tension, the book succeeds in bringing together some of the sharpest thinkers in the field of human sexuality, and goes a long way toward clarifying the diverse perspectives that currently exist.

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DYSGENICS: GENETIC DETERIORATION IN MODERN POPULATIONS. *Human Evolution, Behavior, and Intelligence.*

By Richard Lynn. Westport (Connecticut): Praeger. \$59.95. ix + 237 p; ill.; index. ISBN: 0-275-94917-6. 1996.

This book is a summary of evidence about "dysgenics": the decline in genotypic health, intelligence and character in contemporary populations. A second volume with proposals for appropriate public policies to correct these trends is planned. Chapters survey the literature on heritability of these traits and their distribution across race and social classes. Differential reproduction by class and race usually supports conclusions that there is an ongoing decline in these socially desirable traits in industrial nations.

Lynn's presentation is straightforward and often terse. He summarizes evidence that health, intelligence and character are deteriorating because of relaxation of selection in civilized societies. The evi-

dence for the decline of health is not entirely convincing, and a lot more technical detail along with compelling models would be necessary to conclude that any serious problem for our future is lurking. Evidence for some genotypic decline in intelligence is persuasive, but any effect has been swamped by the secular increase in IQ test scores during the century in industrialized countries, the so-called "Flynn effect." Lynn attributes this increase in IQ to improving nutrition, but I would be more inclined to look at vaccination and the suppression of childhood infections by antibiotics.

It is refreshing to see Lynn's use of the concept of "character" as used by the eugenicists of half a century ago. He relates this concept to more familiar ideas in social science of "superego," "conscientiousness," "work ethic," "delay of gratification" and, as their opposite, "sociopathy." His idea is that all these are indirect reflections of the same thing, that they are correlated with social class, and that class differences in fitness are leading to a decline in society.

The book can be evaluated both as science and as politics. With respect to science, it provides a nice summary of a substantial amount of literature about race and class differences, as well as heritability of IQ test scores, health, and character. Some of the anthropology and genetics is handled in a careless way, so the book is more valuable for its synthesis of published literature than for its theoretical perspective. There are interesting issues here, but it is clear that more correlational studies are not going to provide new insight. It is time to find the molecular basis of the heritabilities that are well established.

With respect to the politics, evaluation will depend on the inclinations of the reader. I personally cannot get very interested in population mean IQ scores but, on the other hand, I now appreciate more the benefits for our children and grandchildren of celibate incarceration of criminals.

The idea that social improvement could and ought to be pursued with eugenics was strong in the first half of this century. Eugenics collapsed as the ideology associated with social science became dominant among academics and the public. Now, perhaps, the pendulum is moving in the other direction. It will be interesting to watch eugenic arguments over the next decade. Certainly they are implicit but unstated in much of our public debate about welfare reform, family planning, abortion and immigration policy.

The old eugenicists have been thoroughly demonized in popular and social science literature. It is easy to find "eugenics," "holocaust" and "genocide" in the same sentence. This is puzzling to me, since the eugenicists by my reading were the same sort of liberal progressive social improvers that are familiar today, only wielding a different technology. Re-