

doesn't "speak health care" feels comfortable with the volume and complexity of the issues Reagan tackles.

Rest assured, this is no small feat. As much as each of us thinks we know, from our own perspectives, what is wrong with health care and how to fix it, it is telling that those who devote their lives to studying the health care system do not agree on the solutions. Even to explain the problems in terms we can understand takes skill and the ability to look at the health care system as a whole. Not everyone can do this, and Reagan does it very well.

In the second half of *Curing the Crisis*, Reagan considers various options for addressing the problems of health care in America today. He discusses models from other countries, particularly Great Britain, Canada, and Germany, and their applicability to the idiosyncrasies of the United States. He discusses the various reform options that are short of wholesale change, many of which are recognizable as pieces of the

political debate about health care reform. Finally, Reagan offers some proposals in "Elements for an Optimal Health Care Plan" (Chapter 8). While he does propose a solution that in his eyes is both politically feasible and likely to succeed, in my eyes this solution is almost an afterthought. The value of Reagan's book lies primarily in its statement of the problems and why they exist.

Is Reagan just another writer on the health care reform bandwagon? I think not. With luck and the will of Congress and the American people, the issues of health care reform may be addressed. The solutions, however, will be the subjects of discussion, analysis, and history in the years to come. There will continue to be a need for a good contemporary resource to assist in understanding the context and realities of the problems that lead to these solutions. Michael Reagan's book is such a resource. I highly recommend it for understanding the mysteries of the health reform debate.

## The Neurotransmitter Revolution: Serotonin, Social Behavior and the Law

Roger D. Masters and Michael T. McGuire (eds.)

Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1994, 254 pp. US\$39.95 cloth. ISBN 0-8093-1792-3. US\$19.95 paper. ISBN 0-8093-1801-6. Southern Illinois University Press, P.O. Box 3697, Carbondale, IL 62902-3697, USA.

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The genetic basis for antisocial behavior is now well established. Numerous adoption and twin studies have shown this to be the case. Genes, of course, produce enzymes which lay down tracts in neurohormonal systems inclining people to choose one course of action over others from the array of possible alternatives. Thus, some people inherit nervous systems, personalities, and cognitive abilities that predispose them, under the correct environmental conditions, to take advantage of others. At the other end of the arena are people who inherit traits predisposing them to altruism and helping behavior. Not surprisingly, it is the lawbreakers and the methods for dealing with them that have been studied more than the lawgivers and benefactors of humanity. It is the squeaky wheel that gets the grease.

This book pulls together contributions from diverse areas of scholarship having in common the relation of biological,

particularly biochemical, theories to the law. Much of the focus is on the neurotransmitter serotonin as illustrative of the way new discoveries cut across disciplines in the natural and social sciences. Low serotonin in the brain is associated with violent and criminal behavior, as well as with depression, and serotonin levels are decreased by, for example, depleted blood sugar, lost social encounters, and low winter light conditions (and increased by their opposites, including alcohol, which may be an attempt at self-medication). Throughout the book there is an emphasis on the fact that heritable deficiencies associated with criminal behavior can be treated.

Masters and McGuire are highly regarded researchers, and they display well-balanced judgments in many features of the book. For example, there are cautionary notes throughout concerning the importance of not over-extrapolating the findings, or jumping prematurely into behavior control through medication, or overturning the philosophical basis of the judicial system, or, even, relying too much on the present findings. In this sense, the rather grand title of the book might have been appropriately subtitled "A Promissory Note."

There is much in this book that is of value. A foreword

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by Margaret Gruter of the Gruter Institute for Law and Behavioral Research provides an historical introduction back to the work of Konrad Lorenz and on up to a conference at Dartmouth College on which the book is based. The editors' four introductory and concluding chapters overview the book and the field more generally. The body of the book includes many notable researchers and covers such topics as violence in monkeys, personality and rank in humans, the role of alcohol and carbohydrates on mood, the specifics of serotonin neurochemistry, and the implications of the biological basis of behavior for law and public policy. One pithy chapter even points out the implications for science spending and the concern researchers should have about the possibility of introducing the item veto into budgetary policy. Proponents of serotonin and other politically targetable research ignore this warning at their peril.

The genie is out of the bottle as far as tracing behavior to neurotransmitters is concerned; if we are wise, we will find it is a good genie. The better our understanding of what causes the great diversity of human behaviors, the better off

we all will be. But, and herein lies the problem, what are we going to do if we discover the biochemical basis for pedophilia, violent rape, and psychopathy? As the Human Genome Project and the Decade of the Brain progress, we may increase the likelihood of intervention or even prevention. Policymakers need to begin thinking about these issues now.

The book would make a very good basis for an honors course dealing with bioethics, especially because it provides a focused core of scientific knowledge that cannot be waved away. The increasing medicalization of criminology and psychopathology raises many points of interest concerning diagnosis, treatment, incarceration, responsibility, and, ultimately, individual eugenics. For example, what would be the effect of pre-screening for a higher-than-average predisposition to low serotonin on a woman's choice to carry a baby to term? If this last topic is not addressed in this book, many others are. The chapters are appropriately varied in technical level and breadth of issue, and there is great grist for intellectual mills.

## The Social Cage: Human Nature and the Evolution of Society

Alexandra Maryanski and Jonathan H. Turner

Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992, 213 pp. US\$39.50 cloth. ISBN 0-8047-2002-9. US\$12.95 paper. ISBN 0-8047-2003-7. Stanford University Press, Stanford University, Stanford, CA 94305, USA.

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Before one leaves the dust jacket, it is clear this is an optimistic book. Maryanski and Turner announce their intention of arguing that man is by nature an individualist, well suited to industrial society. The reader heaves a sigh of relief, since the anonymous, complex society is rapidly becoming the global norm. *The Social Cage* is more optimistic still. In an age of triumphant market capitalism, the model of human nature advanced here accords with the behavioral assumptions of economic rationalism and liberalism: humans are by nature relatively self-contained, autonomous creatures. Hence this text is bad news for collectivists of many types—socialists, communalists, fascists, ethnic-nationalists, mul-

ticulturalists, and the advocates of extended families—in fact, all those who argue that people need close community ties. Maryanski and Turner are aware that they are at odds with sociological correctness. "One of sociology's most unquestioned and sacred assumptions is that humans 'need' groups and 'naturally' seek social solidarity with others, but in our view, this is an unsubstantiated claim" (p. 67). However, as I shall argue, this otherwise well-constructed analytic cage has some flaws that might provide avenues of escape for collectivists.

The authors begin with the forthright statement that to understand culture and society we must begin by understanding humans as animals possessing "certain innate predispositions" (p. 4). Those dispositions are defined through a comparative analysis of ape social structure, which forms the basis of Maryanski and Turner's reconstruction of early hominid society. The argument entails adherence to gradualism and continuity in evolution. Both apes and early hominids are portrayed as individualists, bound only by familial bonds: "[Early hominids] moved about in space

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