

BOOK REVIEWS

L. ELLIS: *Theories of Rape: Inquiries into the Causes of Sexual Aggression*. Hemisphere, New York. xiii + 185 pp.

As Hans Eysenck notes in his Foreword to this book, Lee Ellis carefully climbs onto more than a few precarious branches in order to confront several controversial issues connected with rape which are too important to be appropriately ignored by the scientific method. Issues concerning social class, race, pornography and social reactions to rape victimization are dealt with forthrightly, in depth, and in a remarkably succinct manner (8 chapters including summary and epilogue). In my view the author shows a firm command of the literature and a clear ability to separate the important from the unimportant.

The book begins by considering three contemporary views of rape. For Ellis, feminist theory views rape primarily as an act of aggression filled with socioeconomic and political meaning while social theory stresses the acquisition of attitudes conducive to rape and evolutionary theory emphasizes the adaptive value of strong sex drives in males. A separate chapter on trait theory is not provided although particular elements of this approach are incorporated into later chapters.

The culmination of the book is to be found in Chapters 6 and 7 in which the author outlines 'A Synthesized Theory'. Central to this is the concept of a *forced copulation threshold* in which a number of variables combine to lead an individual to reach activation point. For Ellis, rape is decidedly a sexual act originating deep in evolutionary biology. Thus Ellis outlines the neo-Darwinian idea of gene-based *r/K* reproductive strategies in which a trade-off occurs between opportunistic mating (*r*) and stable parenting (*K*). In this formulation, males are more *r*-selected than females and thus more prone to force copulation, with some males being more *r*-selected than others. Given that this is so, Ellis draws the necessary implications: those most prone to rape will differ in brain functioning and hormone levels from those less inclined to rape. It is here that *r/K* theory touches base with extant dimensions of personality including systems of arousal and sensation seeking. Purely genetic determinism does not operate, however, for many environmental influences can also come into play to affect the systems, including sociocultural factors and pornography as well as the direct learning experienced as a result of sexual encounters. While Ellis has his own ideas on which are the important variables that activate behaviour, his model is quite general and allows for modification as empirical research continues. This is obviously the way of good science. In my view this book makes an extremely important contribution.

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C. G. N. MASCIE-TAYLOR and A. J. BOYCE (Eds): *Human Mating Patterns*. Cambridge University Press, New York (1988). i + 237 pp. \$49.50 Hardback.

"Who marries whom, and why?" remain fascinating questions. This book provides some answers, overviews, and an excellent set of bibliographies, all from a broadly sociobiological perspective. Fourteen chapters from anthropologists, geneticists, primatologists, statisticians and zoologists from Britain, Europe and North America are presented based on updated papers read in Oxford at a 2-day meeting of the Society for the Study of Human Biology.

Much useful information is available divided into four sections. In the first, dealing with historical and demographic studies, A.D.J. Macfarlane argues that the increasingly universal pattern of mating engaged in by the English has been distinct for centuries from those prevailing elsewhere in the world in that choice between partners is considered desirable to satisfy psychological needs. A. C. Swedlund briefly looks at how better estimates of genetic distances between individuals is helping to rejuvenate the study of population structure. C. Peach and J. C. Mitchell examine the related phenomena of how education and social segregation affect ethnic inter-marriage in the United States while L. Jakobi and P. Darlu study small isolated populations to see whether marriage rules conserve demographic equilibria.

Of particular interest for readers of this journal may be the second section on assortative mating. Here C.G.N. Mascie-Taylor critically overviews the literature on psychometric characteristics and suggests the existence of a weak positive relation between assortative mating and fertility. C. Susanne and Y. Lepage show there is assortative mating in both European and non-European samples for a wide variety of anthropometric variables and G. W. Lasker provides a chapter on the repetition of surnames in family trees, a technique pioneered 111 yr ago by George Darwin, the son of Charles Darwin.

The third section deals with the medical and biological aspects of inbreeding. A. F. Read and P. H. Harvey review how both inbreeding and outbreeding avoidances provide interesting theoretical challenges for understanding the evolution of mating systems. D. Quiatt examines how familiarity may override genetic kin preferences in the distribution of social behaviour in primate societies. A. H. Bittles and E. Makov overview the literature on the risks associated with consanguinity concluding that they have been considerably exaggerated. P. Harper and D. F. Roberts provide examples from research on haemophilia, Huntington's chorea, and phenylketonuria to illustrate some of the interrelationship existing between genetic disorders and mating practices.

The fourth and final section contains chapters on how social, religious and cultural factors set human mating systems apart from those of other organisms. B. Dyke and P. G. Riviere show how mating rules can be quantified and related to behaviour. V. Reynolds overviews his work on religious beliefs and human fertility showing, for example, that Islam has maintained a highly pro-natalist ideology from the beginning which today results in a higher birth rate (6.5) than the world average (3.8) or the average for the less developed countries (4.4). He notes that the low status of Moslem women may be influential in maintaining the high fertility rates. Finally, M. Borgerhoff Mulder examines whether models of polygyny derived from animal research can be applied to human populations. For example, in both cases, it may be the wealthy, resource rich individuals who are able to mate the most.