Review: [Untitled]

Reviewed Work(s):

Prosocial Behavior: Theory and Research. by Daniel Bar-Tal

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manipulation" (in the general sense of Trivers) may play a role, or that there is a possible role for selfish behavior (the reverse of altruism). For example: Sahlins argues that if kin-selection were operative, human groups should not exchange members, since it would benefit an individual to be near his or her own relatives. While true in its simplest form, this contention fails to address the issue of possible losses (in terms of fitness) associated with inbreeding. To argue as a sociobiologist, perhaps there is some optimal balance between loss in fitness due to inbreeding and gains from helping relatives. Actually the problem is not restricted to humans. A sister who mates with a brother passes "her" genes via herself and her sib. If she causes the brother no loss in fitness (through access to other females), all would seem to gain in the action. However, the widespread occurrence of outbreeding in nature argues that inbreeding depression is an important selective force countering incest (I thank J. Maynard Smith for this thought). By taking a very simple view of kin-selection, Sahlins reaches a rather final conclusion. I suggest that this conclusion is not justified by his analysis.

A critique of his chapter on natural selection must focus on one major facet. He criticizes natural selection as a viewpoint, but he ignores the wealth of theory and data which uphold its usefulness — Lack's theory of clutch size, Fisher's sex-ratio theory, the Orians-Verner model for polygamy — many more could be cited. It is as if Sahlins elected to ignore most of Wilson's book and all of the evidence bearing upon natural selection applied to organisms. If biologists may be rightfully accused of claiming too much for sociobiology as applied to humans, Sahlins is clearly open to the criticism of misunderstanding how sociobiology applies to *biology*.

On the whole, I found this book unconvincing. As stated in the author's introduction, the book was written in a hurry because the author feared that sociobiology would soon disappear as a science, to live on as some form of pop culture. Given the amount of work now under way in various laboratories, these predictions seem rather unlikely. Nevertheless, I hope Sahlins' book is widely read, since it points out the complexity of human social structure which indeed requires explanation. Perhaps the most important contribution the book makes is in the area of methodology. Quotations from Jean-Paul Sartre, Thomas Hobbes, or Karl Marx (in Chapters 1 and 4) will not settle the question of how useful sociobiology is as a viewpoint for analyzing human behavior. Sociobiology, in its application to humans, will succeed or fail depending upon the insights it provides: most of the work is yet to be done.

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PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOR; THEORY AND RESEARCH. *By Daniel Bar-Tal. Hemisphere Publishing Corporation, Washington and London; John Wiley & Sons, New York.* $12.50. x + 197 p.; ill.; author and subject indexes. 1976.

This book could be subtitled, "Psychology for Sociobiologists." It deals with "prosocial" behavior (reciprocity and altruism) in humans, and seems a diligent summary of these topics as treated in social psychology, not venturing outside that field except to cite a few articles in journals of sociology. Sociobiologists will find this book useful as a starting point for cross-disciplinary synthesis, and as a reminder that man is by far the most studied social organism. This is the largest available monograph on the central themes of sociobiological thought available for any single species. Costs and benefits of prosocial behavior are elaborately analyzed, but kinship, another of the cornerstones of sociobiological theory, is scarcely mentioned and evidently plays a very minor role in psychological explanations of altruism. It is to be hoped that future research will show whether this striking difference in approach reflects real differences in the nature of human vs. non-human sociality, or, as seems more likely, differences in the conceptual traditions of the two fields, which have developed in nearly perfect isolation from each other. Bar-Tal's extensive bibliography (more than 250 entries) has only three references in common with the more than 2500 references of E. O. Wilson's *Sociobiology*.

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MAN IN THE ANDES. *A Multidisciplinary Study of High-Altitude Quechua. US/IBP Synthesis Series 1. Edited by Paul T. Baker and Michael A. Little. Dowden, Hutchinson & Ross, Stroudsburg.* $25.00. xxi + 482 p.; ill.; index. 1976.

The details of the way the native of high altitudes is adapted to hypoxic stress as compared to the lowlander transposed to high altitudes, has challenged biologists since Monge's pioneering studies of the highlander Peruvian Indians. In the hope that the answer might lie in a comprehensive study of a somewhat isolated population that has lived for generations at high altitude, P. T. Baker began, in 1964, a four-year project which was reformulated in 1967 and 1968 under the Human Adaptability Project of the International Biological Programme. The population selected was the Quechua Indian and mestizo natives of the district of Nuñoa, Department of Puno, in southern Peru; the town of Nuñoa is 4050 m above sea level. Data from lowland populations were used for comparative purposes.

The results of the Nuñoa project are presented in this book. It consists of 20 contributions by 17 specialists in ecology, social and political structure, child care, genetics, environmental health, vital statistics, nutrition, hematology, and physiology. Some of this material has already been published elsewhere. The book is well illustrated with graphs and tables