

présentent le groenlandais comme si c'était du latin, ne représentent pas autre chose que des listes de morphèmes sans traduction et sans contexte. Dans la section qui traite de l'incorporation des suffixes lexicaux (appelés abusivement dans le manuel des «infixes»), on trouve un traitement plus clair et plus analytique que dans la plus grande partie des grammaires de cette langue. Il faut dire que les vocabulaires sont bien utiles et qu'il y a une bibliographie de dictionnaires de grammaires et de phrases pour voyageurs. Catherine Enel a traduit en français l'héritage des grammaires prélinguistiques. La fonction d'une grammaire est de renseigner un apprenant sur la manière de bien former des énoncés quand le sens des morphèmes est déjà connu. Mais Enel ne décrit pas comment le mot se fait : le lexigénèse synchronique qui est la grammaire primaire et principale dans toute langue polysynthétique. Ce qui s'impose est de démontrer les sens et les morphèmes qui marquent le sujet, le prédicat, les compléments et les objets directs et indirects. Les arguments de la proposition sont marqués en groenlandais si la proposition s'exprime sous forme d'un seul mot ou plusieurs mots. Cependant, parce que la langue est très flexible, il n'y a pas de coïncidence sens-forme-fonction comme dans les langues inflexionnelles. Le groenlandais, langue inuit, est une partie génotypique de la famille inuit-aleutienne, mais phénotype des langues polysynthétiques et lexigénétiques comme les langues athabascane, algonquine, polynésienne, mongole, turque, hongroise, finnois et basque.

Human Nature and Biocultural Evolution

Joseph Lopreato

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Social biologists must possess all the skills of an anthropologist engaged in an exercise of cross-cultural communication. They must have the capacity to understand and integrate the biological with the cultural. Coming to grips with the bio-social dynamics of interaction requires that an analyst be able to understand and present biological concepts in the sociological idiom, as well as to present social problems in the biological idiom. In this highly complex area of analysis, there is a vast no-man's-land where the scientist walks a tightrope of very precarious interpretation. A little to the right, and a well worked out position is deemed scientific racism. A little too far to the left, and the interpretation is unmasked as being cultural determinism. Indeed, many of the experts and exponents of social biology can be accused of making deliberate use of obfuscating jargon to conceal their inability to function simultaneously at two levels. It is because of this, and not due to any lack of validity in social biology itself, that this new discipline is in danger of being rejected.

In his introduction, Lopreato presents solid arguments for the use of the term "bio-cultural evolution." He very clearly spells out the problematic aspects of Social Darwinism as presented by Herbert Spencer, and the misinterpretations and distortions that arose in the *Zeitgeist* of the European Imperialist-Expansionist

drive in its quest for dominion over “lesser” peoples. Here we see the underpinnings of the European belief in racial and cultural superiority.

Lopreato is at his best discussing social theory. He dissects the ideas of Aristotle, Kant, Durkheim, Marx, Weber and Lévi-Strauss with laser-like precision. He makes particularly extensive use of Durkheimian theory, and in so doing enhances our understanding of social forces and structures. His tour of European history is masterfully mapped out. Individual life histories—for example, a discussion of Beethoven’s conflict with Haydn—are used to illustrate the factor of the self-enhancement drive that is clearly manifest even in individuals who dedicate their genius to improving the quality of life for all of humankind. There is little doubt that Lopreato is a master of social analysis, and that his mastery is based on a broad overview of human society which is, in turn, grounded in great historical depth.

Lopreato provides us with exhaustive coverage of almost every aspect of human behaviour. His examples are drawn from past and present societies ranging from ancient Greece and Rome to simple and complex contemporary societies. The origins of almost every human drive and desire are discussed. In the process, he accounts for the biological underpinnings of reciprocal altruism, incest taboos, marriage, kinship, child rearing, territoriality and sexuality. His chapters on the predispositions of sociality and ascetic altruism cover the total range of human experience, including protest movements, radical behaviour, gambling, rock music, jogging and other exercise fads, the multiplier effect in modern economics, class and sex struggles, superstition and religious beliefs. The penetrating insights that unfold in this all-encompassing essay render it an extremely valuable contribution, particularly for students whose approaches and interests have developed out of biological science. Because of his ambition to produce an all-inclusive and definitive work, Lopreato’s style is at times hurried and rambling, but at no time incoherent. Unlike E.O. Wilson, who in his theory of social evolution stretches the scientific imagination with extrapolations from the social world of ants and termites, Lopreato’s view of bio-cultural evolution has a firm foundation in human history. However, students of Darwinian theory may find it somewhat lacking in a clear-cut understanding of the dialectics of natural selection and its application to such contemporary issues as racism and sexism.

This reader stood in awe of Lopreato’s wide-ranging social analysis and his ingenious interpretation of social evolution. Coming from a biological background myself, I read on, expecting Lopreato to trip up on the barbed wire of no-man’s-land or to have his arguments self-destruct upon re-entry into the biological realm. But this did not occur, even during a second critical reading of the book. Lopreato’s defense of Wynne-Edwards and E.O. Wilson is solid, as is also his curt rejection of Sahlins’ “autonomy of culture.”

I have no reservations in concurring with E.O. Wilson’s remark on the back flap: “This book has a potentially unifying role to play.”