

Mendoza and Mason draw attention to differences in the physiology and temperament of primate species and their relation to their social structure. Socha reviews blood group serology in non-human primates, including investigatory techniques. Rumpler gives his view of the monophyletic origin of lemurs based on analyses of their karyotypes. Smith et al. give a report of their work on rhesus macaque transferrins and albumins.

Volume 2 is concerned primarily with physiology, morphology, and taxonomy, but in several of the papers these elements are tied in with broader views of evolution and make statements about behavior as well. The broad integration of anatomy, physiology, and behavior attempted in various degrees here makes possible a more complete view of the particular adaptations of each primate species. This volume provides an opportunity to refresh one's view of the progress of primate evolutionary studies.

Volume 3 has 15 papers and ranges from socialization, sex, and social behavior to studies of vocalization and, finally, conservation and captive breeding of primates. Some of the papers are fairly extensive reviews. These include Poirier on primate

socialization, Feistner and McGrew on food-sharing, Nadler and Dahl's "Sexual Behaviour of the Great Apes," Tattersall and Sussman's "Ecology and Behaviour of the Malagasy Primates," Poirier and Kanner's review of Asian colobine society, and Mittermeier on primate conservation. Others are more specific in their topic: Chivers' "Social Behavior of the Lesser Apes," Seth et al. on rhesus monkey behavior, Coelho and Bramblett on behavior of baboons.

As with volume 2, there is an attempt to give the historical background in many of the papers and lead up to the present status of the topic covered. Volume 2 is the better integrated, having fewer papers and a better relation between their topics. Volume 3 does have the integrating theme of ethology, but the offerings are narrower in focus and rather less interrelated. Both volumes could benefit by an added chapter which integrates the efforts of the individual contributors.

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SCIENCE AND RELATIVISM: SOME KEY CONTROVERSIES IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE. By L. Laudan. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 1990. xiii + 180 pp. \$12.95 (paper).

We are accustomed to regard the study of philosophy as a kind of high-minded intellectual enterprise exemplified by the denizens in the Grove of Academe in ancient Greece and by scholarly professors at subsequent institutions of higher learning. There is an ambivalence in our attitude towards the term, however, and although we think of philosophy as being the height of intellectual activity on the one hand, on the other we tend to regard it as relatively divorced from the things that really matter. The argument about how many angels can dance on the head of a pin is repeatedly cited as a demonstration of just how inane philosophical disputation can become even though the Medieval concern about whether angels were corporeal entities or not was never phrased in that fashion. So we tend to treat philoso-

phers with a mixture of uncomprehending admiration and unwarranted scorn.

Occasionally philosophy will have an impact on science as, for example, has been the case with "The New Archaeology" where the influence of Sir Karl Popper led to the development of a fearsome hypothetico-deductive jargon and a denigration of induction to the extent that basic fieldwork almost came to a halt. Most practitioners of science, however, plug along with relatively little attention given to the philosophical niceties of what they are about.

Every now and then, however, we get confronted with philosophically based questions from students or colleagues that force us to focus on what philosophers are actually saying. Some of Popper's effects have already been mentioned. More recently, we have been confronted with what seems on the face of it to be an even more irrational position. One school of philosophers has emerged which claims that the realm of scientific endeavor has not succeeded in producing any

accumulation of our comprehension of the world over the past the past several centuries. These philosophers go by the name of "relativists," although no two are exactly alike. Obviously most scientists regard such a claim as a patent absurdity, but it has been offered in all seriousness and most of us are not sufficiently skilled in formal philosophical argumentation to be able to frame a definitive rebuttal.

Larry Laudan, in his gracefully written little book *Science and Relativism*, has come to our rescue. Since the time of Plato, philosophers have favored the format of a dialogue to present their ideas, and Laudan has borrowed and expanded upon this to present his treatment of the problems facing relativism in the form of a conversation held over a three-day period by four fictive members of the American Philosophical Congress.

These four figures represent the major philosophical positions currently identifiable: realism, positivism, pragmatism and, of course, relativism. Each is a clever amalgam of real functioning philosophers past or present. For example, the relativist is portrayed as Quincy Rortabender, a combination of Willard Van Orman Quine, Richard Rorty, and Paul K. Feyerabend, and includes aspects of Thomas S. Kuhn. Laudan recognizes that neither Kuhn nor Quine accept the relativist label, but he maintains that their writings have unmistakable implications for the relativist position. Quincy in fact is far less of a nihilist than the "anything goes" stance of Feyerabend, and, although he does defend the relativist manifesto that "The way we take things to be is quite independent of the way things are," he remains quite gracious during the course of the debate even though the other three rather gang up on him.

The realist is Karl Selnam, evidently a combination of Popper, Roy Wood Sellars, and Hilary Putnam. He has less to say than the others in the debate, and the character is less well drawn. This may be because it is hard to see a fully developed realism in Popper's writings. The positivist is Rudy Reichfeigl, a combination of Rudolf Carnap, Hans Reichenbach, and Herbert Feigl. Finally, the pragmatist is Percy Lauwey, a

mixture of Charles Sanders Peirce and John Dewey with major doses of Larry Laudan himself.

Although Laudan defends the view that the relativist position is "profoundly wrong-headed," he does not present it in the extreme forms that invite ridicule and scorn since, as he notes in his introduction, he is "not interested in cheap victories." In the three days of debate recorded, the antagonists deal with all of the issues in a most civilized manner and with a minimum of the rarefied jargon that often keeps non-philosophers in the dark when they attempt to grapple with the core writings of the various schools of thought.

Most scientists tend to assume key aspects of positivism, pragmatism, and realism, and will be quite comfortable with the position defended by Laudan. If one really wants to see how these various views differ, there is no better book to consult. However, since it is written in conversational form, that means one has to plow through a lot of discussion to get the various points. The conversations are arranged by subject starting with the matter of "Progress and Cumulativity" through "Theory-ladenness and Underdetermination," "Holism," "Standards of Success," "Incommensurability," and "Interests and the Social Determinants of Belief."

For most of us, perhaps the nicest thing about his book is the knowledge that it has been written. It is comforting to be able to cite the writings of a first-rate professional philosopher as a defense against the attacks of the extreme relativists. Laudan's pragmatism is rooted in the traditions that emanated from the Scottish School of "Common Sense" in the eighteenth century, and so too is the Darwinian biology that underlies our own field. The two are happily compatible, and it is nice that we can continue to pursue our chosen research gambits secure in the knowledge that full philosophical justification has been provided by a scholar of the stature of Larry Laudan.

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