

tion, Edelman's examples tend not to demonstrate what usually comes to mind when the two words are used together following an invocation of Charles Darwin—who invented group selection as a striking exception (much debated by contemporary sociobiologists) to the usual rule that natural selection acts only on individuals and their progeny:

It must not be forgotten that . . . a high standard of morality gives but a slight or no advantage to each individual man and his children over the other men of the same tribe. . . . [But a tribe whose members] were always ready to aid one another, and to sacrifice themselves for the common good, would be victorious over most other tribes; and this would be natural selection. At all times throughout the world tribes have supplanted other tribes; and as morality is one important element in their success, the standard of morality [will rise by natural selection] [*The Descent of Man*].

If one looks carefully, Edelman's more general theory usually encompasses both the Darwinian two-step and this type of group-*qua*-group selection—but both tend to be missing from the examples on which biologists will likely focus their attention.

It is very easy to pick out an unphysiological assumption or unfulfilled prediction (my grumble is about assuming shunting rather than subtractive inhibition in cerebral cortex) in a work with the breadth and depth of *Neural Darwinism*. On such a pretext, many readers will rationalize laying this admittedly difficult book aside, unfinished. Yet those who persevere may come away feeling, "The brain really could work that way," not only because Edelman's assumptions are usually close-to-physiological but because he frames the issues in ways that have been repeatedly successful, in stochastic and Darwinian contexts, in revealing emergent properties. If you are concerned with the questions Edelman addresses, this book may well be worth your time.

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## The Rise of Objectivism

**Sociology and Scientism.** The American Quest for Objectivity, 1880–1940. ROBERT C. BANNISTER. University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 1987. x, 301 pp. \$29.95.

Robert C. Bannister has written a fascinating book about an episode in the history of American sociology and social thought, providing both an account of one strand in the history of American intellectual life and a

tale of passion and politics, of how men strive to shape their worlds out of the social resources available to them. Throughout *Sociology and Scientism*, Bannister's goal is to understand the history of objectivism in American sociology. He examines its various meanings and how they changed, emphasizing, at different times, subject matter, methods, scientist. He considers the growing centrality of statistics in research methodology and in sociology in general. And he explores the process by which a discipline whose original self-definition emphasized a concern with social reform increasingly distanced itself from it. It is these developments that Bannister calls "scientism."

*Sociology and Scientism* recounts two related developments: the engagement of sociology in the "major reorientation of American thought that centered in the years between 1907 and the outbreak of the First World War, when a language of 'efficiency' and 'social control' gradually eclipsed the humanitarian, moralistic rhetoric of earlier reformers" (p. 5) and the obsession with method that consumed sociologists between the two world wars. Focusing on seven men whose lives span the first two generations of American social science, Bannister constructs a richly detailed story of the intersection of these men's personal, professional, and intellectual lives.

Of the first generation, those who became prominent before the First World War, Bannister considers (i) Lester Ward (1839–1913), the acknowledged founder of American sociology, who spent most of his professional life in institutions such as the Bureau of Statistics and the Smithsonian, accepting a chair at Brown University near the end of his career only; (ii) Franklin Henry Giddings (1855–1929), whose sociological career was spent primarily at Columbia University, where he was particularly important in preaching the value of statistics to the second generation of American sociologists; (iii) William Graham Sumner (1840–1909) at Yale University, whose *Folkways* provided the theoretical justification for the move toward objectivism among the second generation; and (iv) Albion Small (1854–1926) of the University of Chicago, chair of the first department of sociology in the United States and editor of the first sociological journal, the *American Journal of Sociology*. Each of these men was of central importance in the history of American social thought and in establishing the institutions associated with it from the late 19th and into the first decades of the 20th century.

Among the second generation of sociologists, Bannister focuses on three differing proponents of scientism: (i) Luther Lee Bernard (1881–1951), the peripatetic (hav-

ing taught at the universities of Florida, Missouri, Minnesota, and North Carolina, Cornell, and Tulane, among other places) and rebellious leader of the dissident sociologists whose struggle to establish his version of a "scientific" sociology is a central political drama in *Sociology and Scientism*; (ii) F. Stuart Chapin (1888–1974), a student of Giddings's at Columbia, an unabashed advocate of strict technical thinking in sociology and influential in shaping the Department of Sociology at the University of Minnesota, which he long chaired; and (iii) William Fielding Ogburn (1886–1959), also a Giddings student and the most professionally successful of the interwar objectivists, whose career was spent primarily at Columbia University (1919–1927) and the University of Chicago (1927–1951).

With a confidence that reflects his broad historical knowledge, Bannister places each man in the relevant context of historical events and institutions—the growing new universities and professionalized graduate training programs, the First World War and the political upheavals associated with it, the rise of Marxism and the Russian Revolution, the growth of giant monopolies and the Great Depression of the 1930s—as well as in relation to each other, operating as they did in a professional world much smaller than our own. The picture that emerges is a richly textured web of social and intellectual connections.

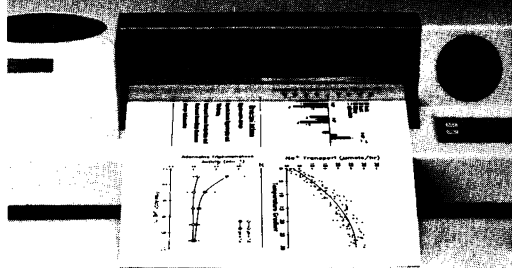
Bannister resists any single explanation for the rise of objectivism, arguing that it reflected the convergence of many factors that shaped American academic culture from the 1910s through the 1930s: "a growing sense of social fragmentation and the absence of common values and standards in the late Progressive Era . . . a rejection and secularization of nineteenth-century American Protestantism" (p. 233), the professionalization of scholarship, "the institutionalization and specialization of sociological scholarship, first within the university and later within foundation-sponsored institutes" (p. 234), political pressures, and individual personalities. But the list of explanatory factors is ultimately unsatisfying, reflecting the inadequacy of Bannister's theoretical work while, simultaneously, demonstrating his extensive scholarship.

Bannister is successful at moving beyond the constraints imposed by the dichotomies of intellectual content vs. social context that dominated earlier debates in intellectual history and the sociology of knowledge. He views ideas as the socially constructed products of intellectual actors who pursue goals within particular historical contexts. But these actors have yet to be seen as generated—as men and women, although most-

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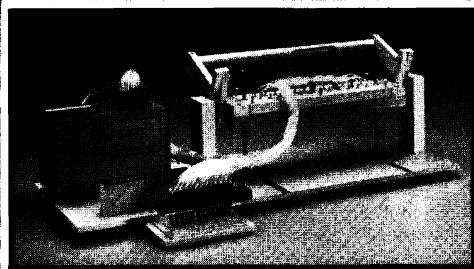
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ly men—and to have that fact recognized as important for understanding their behavior. Although his biographies document the impact of personal life on the intellectual actions he describes, Bannister does not systematically incorporate that insight into his explanations of changes in sociological thinking. Yet his account strongly suggests that it was not personality in general but rather the particulars of gender relations—the problem of achieving manhood under changing historical conditions and relations with women (be they mothers, wives, or lovers)—that are important for understanding the history of scientific thought in American sociology.

Bannister's attention to the personal lives of the men he studies raises issues that have been debated in recent feminist scholarship on science. Yet this perspective, and its contributions, go unrecognized in *Sociology and Scientism*. For all its strengths, then, the book falters in integrating personal life into the explanations of why American sociological thinking changed as and when it did. But even with this limitation, this is a book to be read with profit by anyone interested in the history of American scientific thought and intellectual life.

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## Books Received

**Agronomy of Grassland Systems.** C. J. Pearson and R. L. Ison. Cambridge University Press, New York, 1987. vi, 169 pp., illus. \$49.50; paper, \$16.95.

**AIDS.** Principles, Practices, and Politics. Inge B. Corless and Mary Pittman-Lindeman, Eds. Hemisphere (Harper and Row), New York, 1987. xviii, 252 pp. \$39.50; paper, \$15.95.

**AIDS and the Nervous System.** Mark L. Rosenblum, Robert M. Levy, and Dale E. Bredesen, Eds. Raven, New York, 1987. xiv, 410 pp., illus. \$65.

**Algorithmic Information Theory.** Gregory J. Chaitin. Cambridge University Press, New York, 1987. xii, 175 pp. \$29.95. Cambridge Tracts in Theoretical Computer Science, vol. 1.

**Alzheimer's Disease.** Problems, Prospects, and Perspectives. Harvey J. Altman, Ed. Plenum, New York, 1987. xiv, 397 pp., illus. \$75. From a conference, Detroit, MI, April 1986.

**Antarctica.** The Next Decade. Anthony Parsons, Ed. Cambridge University Press, New York, 1987. xii, 164 pp., illus. \$44.50. Studies in Polar Research.

**Biophysics and Synchrotron Radiation.** A. Bianconi and A. Congiu Castellano, Eds. Springer-Verlag, New York, 1987. xii, 333 pp., illus. \$75. Springer Series in Biophysics, vol. 2. From a conference, Frascati, Italy, July 1986.

**The Body in Time.** Kenneth Jon Rose. Wiley, New York, 1988. xiv, 237 pp., illus. \$19.95. Wiley Science Editions.

**Boundary Value Problems of Finite Elasticity.** Local Theorems on Existence, Uniqueness, and Analytic Dependence on Data. Tullio Valent. Springer-Verlag, New York, 1987. xii, 191 pp. \$64. Springer Tracts in Natural Philosophy, vol. 31.

**Brain Systems, Disorders, and Psychotropic Drugs.** Heather Ashton. Oxford University Press, New York, 1987. viii, 547 pp., illus. \$85. Oxford Medical Publications.