

argument made by Thornhill and Palmer that rape is an evolutionary inevitability. Brown Travis states that the contributors to her volume make their arguments from the perspectives of animal behavior, ecology, evolutionary biology, cultural anthropology, philosophy, primatology, psychology, and sociology, although she declines to identify her writers or herself by title, affiliation, or training. She asserts that, of the authors represented in her volume, "None find the evolutionary account of rape [in the Thornhill and Palmer text] to be in any way compelling."

In each section of *Evolution, Gender, and Rape*, one finds well-written chapters, all of which challenge Thornhill and Palmer's arguments. Brown Travis and several of the book's authors raise a concern about using supposedly scientific evidence to make evolutionary assertions about gender; they note the dangerousness of this argument in cases in which it has historically been applied to both gender and race. They also challenge Thornhill and Palmer's notion that rape has evolved as a means of providing an advantage to males, who need to propagate their genes. Other authors in the book challenge the popular notion that to be a "feminist" is to be antiscience or to be only political.

All the authors seem to effectively refute the argument that rape is an evolutionary imperative, an inevitable result of dynamics between women and men. Some make scientific arguments, critiquing Thornhill and Palmer for poor scientific grounding. Others, using sociological approaches, criticize Thornhill and Palmer for the policy implications of their book: "Given the speculative character of their Darwinizing and the elusiveness of their proposals, even their inability to recognize crucial issues, policies influenced by their text might well make matters worse."

The collection of chapters in this volume is compelling, in part because such a variety of approaches is represented. All the chapters appear to be well conceived and include academic references. Several of the authors use humor effectively to make their

points. One writes, "Evolutionary psychology satisfies our hunger for a comprehensive explanation of human existence, for a theory of inevitability that will remove the ambiguities and the uncertainties of emotional and moral life. . . . Blame your genes, not your mother."

Evolution, Gender, and Rape clearly adds to the literature pertaining to sexual assault and to our understanding of gender issues. However, the book is limited in its scope in that it

responds only to Thornhill and Palmer's book and not to broader issues in the field of gender studies. Overall, this book can be considered a valuable resource for anyone who is wrestling with concerns about gender dynamics, sexual aggression, or evolutionary psychology.

Reference

1. Thornhill R, Palmer C: *A Natural History of Rape: Biological Bases of Sexual Coercion*. Cambridge, Mass, MIT Press, 2000

The New Science of Intimate Relationships

by Garth Fletcher; Malden, Massachusetts, Blackwell Publishers, 2002, 324 pages, \$27.95 softcover

Edith C. Fraser, Ph.D.

This book is a scholarly and reflective overview of research on one of the most popular subjects today: relationships. It approaches the topic of intimate relationships scientifically and challenges some popular theories while supporting others. *The New Science of Intimate Relationships* is easy to read and is divided into 11 chapters and four parts. Its author, Garth Fletcher, an evolutionary social psychologist, is one of the foremost theorists of intimate relationships. The primary premise of his book is that "Regardless of sexual orientation, the need for love is . . . born of the longing to reunite with one's long-lost other half and achieve an ancient unity destroyed by the gods."

Using as his foundation three primary theoretical frameworks—general social theories, general relationship theories, and local relationship theories—as they intersect with cognitive processes, Fletcher provides a model for understanding relationships that is erudite, logical, and understandable. At the same time, he explores the origins of the "intimate relationship mind," providing data to support the role of evolution and its interaction with culture as a primary source

of the intimate relationship mind. He explores the role of emotions in intimate relationships and suggests that love and other emotions have an evolutionary component and represent specific adaptations associated with reproductive success of the human species. "Humans have a basic need to be accepted appreciated, and cared for, and to reciprocate such attitudes—to love and to be loved," he writes.

This book highlights not only the power of evolutionary processes in explaining the origin of intimate relationships but also the development of human relationships. Fletcher concentrates on the role of social judgment in relationships. Citing numerous sources, he examines the accuracy and inaccuracy of the social judgment of strangers, dating couples, and married couples in intimate relationships. The book looks at various reasons for relationship success and confronts simplistic models, which focus only on communication or good management. Fletcher illustrates the "complexity and subtlety of the process and concept of communication." He discusses the role of attachment style not only for children but also for adults after relationships break up. The selection of mates is a pivotal component of relationship development, and Fletcher postu-

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lates that mate selection is not random but rather is predicated on interplay between genetic factors and exterior features, such as status, physical attractiveness, personality traits, and attitudes. These factors interact throughout the course of the relationship.

In the final section, Fletcher explores sex, passion, and domestic violence, which he cites as challenges to the evolutionary and social psychological framework. He explores gender differences in sexuality, jealousy, and sexual orientation historically and through the lens of evolutionary de-

velopment. He compellingly confronts such conundrums as aggression, domestic violence, and culture in intimate relationships.

Fletcher has an accessible writing style and actively confronts several camps in this book: pop psychological stereotypes about relationships, social constructionist models, and feminist theoretical frameworks. Thus *The New Science of Intimate Relationships* is a thought-provoking, provocative, and challenging framework for social scientists and laypersons who are interested in exploring intimate relationships in-depth.

Combating AIDS: Communication Strategies in Action

by Arvind Singhal and Everett M. Rogers; Thousand Oaks, California, Sage Publications, 2003, 426 pages, \$29.95 softcover

Francine Cournois, M.D.

HIV infection has been documented in virtually every country in the world, and the epicenter of the epidemic has moved to resource-poor countries. *Combating AIDS: Communication Strategies in Action* offers a broad perspective on attempts to contain this global HIV epidemic. Based on the authors' own work and experiences, the book examines primarily strategies adopted by Brazil, India, Kenya, South Africa, Thailand, and, to a lesser extent, Cambodia, Tanzania, Uganda, the United States, and Zambia.

The variability described by the authors in different geographic approaches lends itself to examination of many controversial questions, such as How does HIV break out of high-risk groups and enter the general population? What are the most effective population-based strategies for reducing HIV transmission? How can prevention be tailored to specific groups and local culture? How can communication theory and the media be used most effectively to convey

prevention messages? What governmental responses have helped or hindered in containing the epidemic and its impact? And, finally, What factors influence the manufacture and distribution of generic antiretroviral medications? The authors offer illuminating commentary on each of these questions, giving health and mental health researchers and clinicians an opportunity to step back from the heavily biomedical or clinical focus of their work and see its place in the larger global framework.

Combating AIDS strongly emphasizes the value of community involvement in creating innovative prevention approaches and reducing stigma. Its detailed account of how HIV first spreads among specific risk groups—for example, truck drivers, commercial sex workers, gay men, and intravenous drug users—and then makes its way into the larger population is particularly informative. The descriptions of entertainment and education programs shed light on how to make HIV-prevention messages engaging, fun, and even erotic. The value of ethnographic, qualitative, and participatory research methods is cogently presented, as is the argument for empowering local people in planning

their own change processes. The authors emphasize that biomedically dominated prevention programs focused on individual behavioral change are less effective than multidisciplinary approaches that incorporate the social sciences, a public health perspective, and communication theory. Moreover, approaches that involve local populations and their leaders have the best chance of engendering the political will and resources needed to fight this epidemic.

Structuring a narrative that has such ambitious goals is not an easy task. It is perhaps for this reason that I experienced the book as somewhat disjointed, jumping back and forth between countries and topics. And this is not a text that one can turn to for precise explanations of HIV-related medical approaches: the authors are not physicians, and this topic is not at the heart of what the book is about. But the reader who wants to learn about how governments, local communities, and communication science can be enlisted in the fight against HIV will find *Combating AIDS* to be a very rewarding read.

Regarding the Pain of Others

by Susan Sontag; New York, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003, 126 pages, \$20

Maxine Harris, Ph.D.

In *Regarding the Pain of Others*, author Susan Sontag raises the compelling moral and intellectual question, What role do images of war and human suffering play in shaping our response to the pain of others? Do we become numbed to the pain as we watch the succession of images that scroll across the screen as we watch the evening news? Or do the

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