

Book Reviews

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Racial Variation in Man. (Institute of Biology Symposium No. 22.) Edited by F. J. Ebling. (Pp. xx + 241; 7 figures + 11 tables. £9.50.) Oxford: Blackwell Scientific Publications. 1975.

Racial Variation in Man, No. 22 of the Symposia of the Society for the Study of Human Biology, is an account of the Proceedings of a Symposium held at the Royal Geographical Society, London, on 19 and 20 September 1974. Contributors are distinguished and chapters are well written. References are provided for more detailed reading. There is a useful subject index. An important feature of this volume is the inclusion of a précis of paper discussion.

Session No. 1 is concerned with current views of human evolution (Michael H. Day) and of the biological (Eric Sunderland) and cultural (Edward Leach) components of race. Attention is drawn to the real difficulty of defining 'race' in taxonomic terms.

Session No. 2 debates the value and validity of attempting to measure differences in aptitude (J. S. Weiner) and intelligence (Arthur Jensen; Barbara Tizard) between races. Discussion is particularly lively and 'beliefs' sometimes strongly expressed. Emphasis is often on 'debate' rather than scientific explanation.

Sessions No. 3 and No. 4 contain interesting papers on crime and violence (A. E. Bottoms and Paul Wiles), interracial crosses (Newton E. Morton), multiracial societies in history (H. S. Deighton), and race problems today (Steven Rose; Fernando Henriques). Session No. 3 contains the 14th Darwinian Lecture, jointly arranged by the Eugenic Society and the Institute of Biology, which is given by Professor Newton E. Morton. This paper, entitled 'Interracial Crosses and Group Differences' contains much interesting information on interracial crosses and is a major contribution to the study of methods of analysis applied to population differences.

This book should be of great interest to the general reader, particularly as an indicator of the factors currently considered to be important to a consideration of racial variation in man and also because of the wealth and variety of data presented. Some readers will be surprised (perhaps disturbed) by the somewhat heated discussion of certain papers. Assess-

ment of racial differences, even by 'the scientist', is not always dispassionate. At £9.50 this book is reasonably priced.

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Human Multiple Reproduction. By Ian MacGillivray, P. P. S. Nylander, and Gerald Corney, with contributions by Valerie Farr and E. B. Robson. (Pp. ix + 238; figures + tables. £8.50.) London: W. B. Saunders. 1975.

In this book five contributors have pooled their knowledge to produce a wide coverage of the many aspects of twinning in man: social anthropology (Corney), zygosity and placentation (Corney and Robson), genetics and frequency of twinning (Nylander), obstetrics (MacGillivray), and survival and development after birth (Farr).

Most of the chapters provide a satisfactory review of current literature, though there is a tendency to catalogue facts rather than to interpret them. It was disappointing to find so little about placental function in the chapter on placentation; in the later chapters there is a considerable amount of obstetrical detail which may not interest the general reader. The section which interested me most (though this is probably only a reflection of my personal interests) were the chapters by Nylander on the frequency of twinning. These chapters rely heavily on his own work in Nigeria, where the Yoruba have the highest twinning rate in the world; they are also polygynous, which is useful for investigating whether the father plays a role in the inheritance of twinning.

The book is well produced and well written, with only an occasional lapse (such as the reference to 'the newborn situation' on p. 28). There are also a few errors or ambiguities due to hasty writing; the worst is on p. 169: '(these authors) found a deficiency of monozygotic twins with Down's syndrome which they suggested implied a high genetic component in this condition.'

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