

# **Sociobiology** THE NEW SYNTHESIS

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## The Morality of the Gene

Camus said that the only serious philosophical question is suicide. That is wrong even in the strict sense intended. The biologist, who is concerned with questions of physiology and evolutionary history, realizes that self-knowledge is constrained and shaped by the emotional control centers in the hypothalamus and limbic system of the brain. These centers flood our consciousness with all the emotions—hate, love, guilt, fear, and others—that are consulted by ethical philosophers who wish to intuit the standards of good and evil. What, we are then compelled to ask, made the hypothalamus and limbic system? They evolved by natural selection. That simple biological statement must be pursued to explain ethics and ethical philosophers, if not epistemology and epistemologists, at all depths. Self-existence, or the suicide that terminates it, is not the central question of philosophy. The hypothalamic-limbic complex automatically denies such logical reduction by countering it with feelings of guilt and altruism. In this one way the philosopher's own emotional control centers are wiser than his solipsist consciousness, "knowing" that in evolutionary time the individual organism counts for almost nothing. In a Darwinist sense the organism does not live for itself. Its primary function is not even to reproduce other organisms; it reproduces genes, and it serves as their temporary carrier. Each organism generated by sexual reproduction is a unique, accidental subset of all the genes constituting the species. Natural selection is the process whereby certain genes gain representation in the following generations superior to that of other genes located at the same chromosome positions. When new sex cells are manufactured in each generation, the winning genes are pulled apart and reassembled to manufacture new organisms that, on the average, contain a higher proportion of the same genes. But the individual organism is only their vehicle, part of an elaborate device to preserve and spread them with the least possible biochemical perturbation. Samuel Butler's famous aphorism, that the chicken is only an egg's way of making another egg, has been modernized: the organism is only DNA's way of making more DNA. More to the point, the hypothalamus and limbic system are engineered to perpetuate DNA.

In the process of natural selection, then, any device that can insert a higher proportion of certain genes into subsequent generations will come to characterize the species. One class of such devices promotes prolonged individual survival. Another promotes superior mating performance and care of the resulting offspring. As more complex social behavior by the organism is added to the genes' techniques for replicating themselves, altruism becomes increasingly prevalent and eventually appears in exaggerated forms. This brings us to the central theoretical problem of sociobiology: how can altruism, which by definition reduces personal fitness, possibly evolve by natural selection? The answer is kinship: if the genes causing the altruism are shared by two organisms because of common descent, and if the

altruistic act by one organism increases the joint contribution of these genes to the next generation, the propensity to altruism will spread through the gene pool. This occurs even though the altruist makes less of a solitary contribution to the gene pool as the price of its altruistic act.

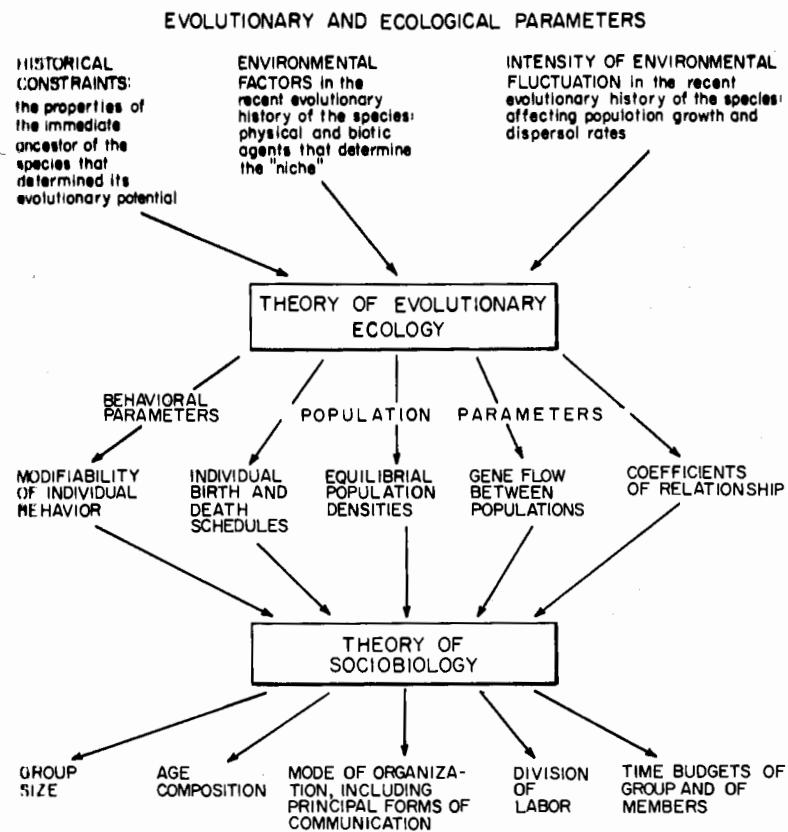
To his own question, "Does the Absurd dictate death?" Camus replied that the struggle toward the heights is itself enough to fill a man's heart. This arid judgment is probably correct, but it makes little sense except when closely examined in the light of evolutionary theory. The hypothalamic-limbic complex of a highly social species, such as man, "knows," or more precisely it has been programmed to perform as if it knows, that its underlying genes will be proliferated maximally only if it orchestrates behavioral responses that bring into play an efficient mixture of personal survival, reproduction, and altruism. Consequently, the centers of the complex tax the conscious mind with ambivalences whenever the organisms encounter stressful situations. Love joins hate; aggression, fear, expansiveness, withdrawal, and so on; in blends designed not to promote the happiness and survival of the individual, but to favor the maximum transmission of the controlling genes.

The ambivalences stem from counteracting pressures on the units of natural selection. Their genetic consequences will be explored formally later in this book. For the moment suffice it to note that what is good for the individual can be destructive to the family; what preserves the family can be harsh on both the individual and the tribe to which its family belongs; what promotes the tribe can weaken the family and destroy the individual; and so on upward through the permutations of levels of organization. Counteracting selection on these different units will result in certain genes being multiplied and fixed, others lost, and combinations of still others held in static proportions. According to the present theory, some of the genes will produce emotional states that reflect the balance of counteracting selection forces at the different levels.

I have raised a problem in ethical philosophy in order to characterize the essence of sociobiology. Sociobiology is defined as the systematic study of the biological basis of all social behavior. For the present it focuses on animal societies, their population structure, castes, and communication, together with all of the physiology underlying the social adaptations. But the discipline is also concerned with the social behavior of early man and the adaptive features of organization in the more primitive contemporary human societies. Sociology *sensu stricto*, the study of human societies at all levels of complexity, still stands apart from sociobiology because of its largely structuralist and nongenetic approach. It attempts to explain human behavior primarily by empirical description of the outermost phenotypes and by unaided intuition, without reference to evolutionary explanations in the true genetic sense. It is most successful, in the

way descriptive taxonomy and ecology have been most successful, when it provides a detailed description of particular phenomena and demonstrates first-order correlations with features of the environment. Taxonomy and ecology, however, have been reshaped entirely during the past forty years by integration into neo-Darwinist evolutionary theory—the "Modern Synthesis," as it is often called—in which each phenomenon is weighed for its adaptive significance and then related to the basic principles of population genetics. It may not be too much to say that sociology and the other social sciences, as well as the humanities, are the last branches of biology waiting to be included in the Modern Synthesis. One of the functions of sociobiology, then, is to reformulate the foundations of the social sciences in a way that draws these subjects into the Modern Synthesis. Whether the social sciences can be truly biologized in this fashion remains to be seen.

This book makes an attempt to codify sociobiology into a branch of evolutionary biology and particularly of modern population biology. I believe that the subject has an adequate richness of detail and aggregate of self-sufficient concepts to be ranked as coordinate with such disciplines as molecular biology and developmental biology. In the past its development has been slowed by too close an identification with ethology and behavioral physiology. In the view presented here, the new sociobiology should be compounded of roughly equal parts of invertebrate zoology, vertebrate zoology, and population biology. Figure 1-1 shows the schema with which I closed *The Insect Societies*, suggesting how the amalgam can be achieved. Biologists have always been intrigued by comparisons between societies of invertebrates, especially insect societies, and those of vertebrates. They have dreamed of identifying the common properties of such disparate units in a way that would provide insight into all aspects of social evolution, including that of man. The goal can be expressed in modern terms as follows: when the same parameters and quantitative theory are used to analyze both termite colonies and troops of rhesus macaques, we will have a unified science of sociobiology. This may seem an impossibly difficult task. But as my own studies have advanced, I have been increasingly impressed with the functional similarities between invertebrate and vertebrate societies and less so with the structural differences that seem, at first glance, to constitute such an immense gulf between them. Consider for a moment termites and monkeys. Both are formed into cooperative groups that occupy territories. The group members communicate hunger, alarm, hostility, caste status or rank, and reproductive status among themselves by means of something on the order of 10 to 100 nonsyntactical signals. Individuals are intensely aware of the distinction between groupmates and nonmembers. Kinship plays an important role in group structure and probably served as a chief generative force of sociality in the first place. In both kinds of society there is a well marked division of labor,

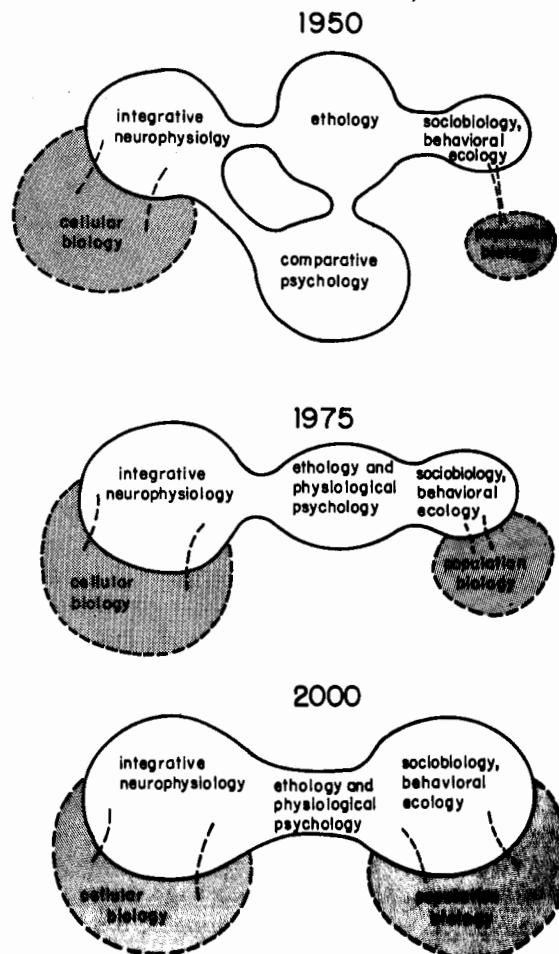


**Figure 1-1** The connections that can be made between phylogenetic studies, ecology, and sociobiology.

although in the insect society there is a much stronger reproductive component. The details of organization have been evolved by an evolutionary optimization process of unknown precision, during which some measure of added fitness was given to individuals with cooperative tendencies—at least toward relatives. The fruits of cooperativeness depend upon the particular conditions of the environment and are available to only a minority of animal species during the course of their evolution.

This comparison may seem facile, but it is out of such deliberate oversimplification that the beginnings of a general theory are made. The formulation of a theory of sociobiology constitutes, in my opinion, one of the great manageable problems of biology for the next twenty or thirty years. The prolegomenon of Figure 1-1 guesses part of its future outline and some of the directions in which it is most likely to lead animal behavior research. Its central precept is that the evolution of social behavior can be fully comprehended only through an understanding, first, of demography, which yields the vital infor-

mation concerning population growth and age structure, and, second, of the genetic structure of the populations, which tells us what we need to know about effective population size in the genetic sense, the coefficients of relationship within the societies, and the amounts of gene flow between them. The principal goal of a general theory of sociobiology should be an ability to predict features of social organization from a knowledge of these population parameters combined with information on the behavioral constraints imposed by the genetic constitution of the species. It will be a chief task of evolutionary ecology, in turn, to derive the population parameters from a knowledge of the evolutionary history of the species and of the environment in which the most recent segment of that history unfolded. The most



**Figure 1-2** A subjective conception of the relative number of ideas in various disciplines in and adjacent to behavioral biology to the present time and as it might be in the future.

important feature of the prolegomenon, then, is the sequential relation between evolutionary studies, ecology, population biology, and sociobiology.

In stressing the tightness of this sequence, however, I do not wish to underrate the filial relationship that sociobiology has had in the past with the remainder of behavioral biology. Although behavioral biology is traditionally spoken of as if it were a unified subject, it is now emerging as two distinct disciplines centered on neurophysiology and on sociobiology, respectively. The conventional wisdom also speaks of ethology, which is the naturalistic study of whole patterns of animal behavior, and its companion enterprise, comparative psychology, as the central, unifying fields of behavioral biology. They are not, both are destined to be cannibalized by neurophysiology and sensory physiology from one end and sociobiology and behavioral ecology from the other (see Figure 1-2).

I hope not too many scholars in ethology and psychology will be offended by this vision of the future of behavioral biology. It seems to be indicated both by the extrapolation of current events and by consideration of the logical relationship behavioral biology holds with

the remainder of science. The future, it seems clear, cannot be with the ad hoc terminology, crude models, and curve fitting that characterize most of contemporary ethology and comparative psychology. Whole patterns of animal behavior will inevitably be explained within the framework, first, of integrative neurophysiology, which classifies neurons and reconstructs their circuitry, and, second, of sensory physiology, which seeks to characterize the cellular transducers at the molecular level. Endocrinology will continue to play a peripheral role, since it is concerned with the cruder tuning devices of nervous activity. To pass from this level and reach the next really distinct discipline, we must travel all the way up to the society and the population. Not only are the phenomena best described by families of models different from those of cellular and molecular biology, but the explanations become largely evolutionary. There should be nothing surprising in this distinction. It is only a reflection of the larger division that separates the two greater domains of evolutionary biology and functional biology. As Lewontin (1972a) has truly said: "Natural selection of the character states themselves is the essence of Darwinism. All else is molecular biology."

## Chapter 27

# Man: From Sociobiology to Sociology

Let us now consider man in the free spirit of natural history, as though we were zoologists from another planet completing a catalog of social species on Earth. In this macroscopic view the humanities and social sciences shrink to specialized branches of biology; history, biography, and fiction are the research protocols of human ethology, and anthropology and sociology together constitute the sociobiology of a single primate species.

*Homo sapiens* is ecologically a very peculiar species. It occupies the widest geographical range and maintains the highest local densities of any of the primates. An astute ecologist from another planet would not be surprised to find that only one species of *Homo* exists. Modern man has preempted all the conceivable hominid niches. Two or more species of hominids did coexist in the past, when the *Australopithecus* man-apes and possibly an early *Homo* lived in Africa. But only one evolving line survived into late Pleistocene times to participate in the emergence of the most advanced human social traits.

Modern man is anatomically unique. His erect posture and wholly bipedal locomotion are not even approached in other primates that occasionally walk on their hind legs, including the gorilla and chimpanzee. The skeleton has been profoundly modified to accommodate the change: the spine is curved to distribute the weight of the trunk more evenly down its length; the chest is flattened to move the center of gravity back toward the spine; the pelvis is broadened to serve as an attachment for the powerful striding muscles of the upper legs and reshaped into a basin to hold the viscera; the tail is eliminated, its vertebrae (now called the coccyx) curved inward to form part of the floor of the pelvic basin; the occipital condyles have rotated far beneath the skull so that the weight of the head is balanced on them; the face is shortened to assist this shift in gravity; the thumb is enlarged to give power to the hand; the leg is lengthened, and the foot is drastically narrowed and lengthened to facilitate striding. Other changes have taken place. Hair has been lost from most of the body. It is still not known why modern man is a "naked ape." One plausible explanation is that nakedness served as a device to cool the body during the strenuous pursuit of prey in the heat of the African plains. It is associated with man's exceptional reliance on sweating to reduce body heat; the human body contains from two to five million sweat glands, far more than in any other primate species.

The reproductive physiology and behavior of *Homo sapiens* have also undergone extraordinary evolution. In particular, the estrous cycle of the female has changed in two ways that affect sexual and social behavior. Menstruation has been intensified. The females of some other primate species experience slight bleeding, but only in women is there a heavy sloughing of the wall of the "disappointed womb" with consequent heavy bleeding. The estrus, or period of female "heat," has been replaced by virtually continuous sexual

activity. Copulation is initiated not by response to the conventional primate signals of estrus, such as changes in color of the skin around the female sexual organs and the release of pheromones, but by extended foreplay entailing mutual stimulation by the partners. The traits of physical attraction are, moreover, fixed in nature. They include the pubic hair of both sexes and the protuberant breasts and buttocks of women. The flattened sexual cycle and continuous female attractiveness cement the close marriage bonds that are basic to human social life.

At a distance a perceptive Martian zoologist would regard the globular head as a most significant clue to human biology. The cerebrum of *Homo* was expanded enormously during a relatively short span of evolutionary time (see Figure 27-1). Three million years ago *Australopithecus* had an adult cranial capacity of 400-500 cubic centimeters, comparable to that of the chimpanzee and gorilla. Two million years later its presumptive descendant *Homo erectus* had a capacity of about 1000 cubic centimeters. The next million years saw an increase to 1400-1700 cubic centimeters in Neanderthal man and 900-2000 cubic centimeters in modern *Homo sapiens*. The growth in intelligence that accompanied this enlargement was so great that it cannot yet be measured in any meaningful way. Human beings can be compared among themselves in terms of a few of the basic components of intelligence and creativity. But no scale has been invented that can objectively compare man with chimpanzees and other living primates.

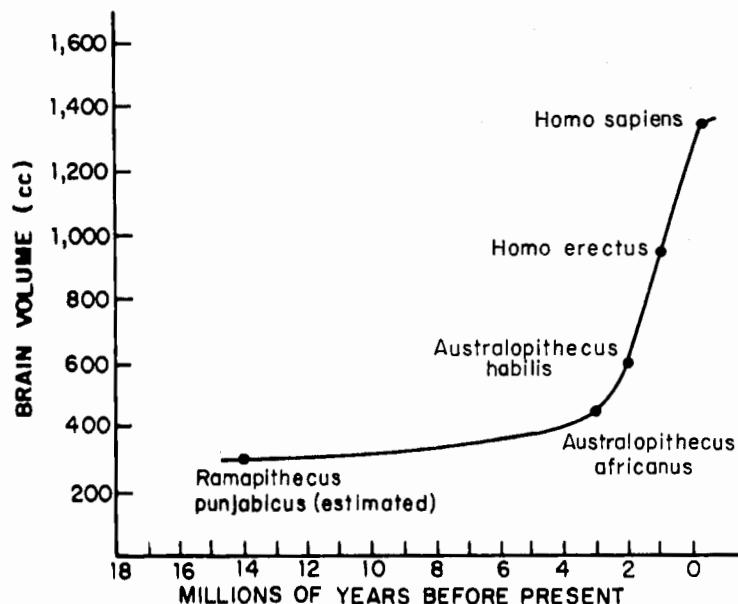


Figure 27-1 The increase in brain size during human evolution. (Redrawn from Pilbeam, 1972.)

We have leaped forward in mental evolution in a way that continues to defy self-analysis. The mental hypertrophy has distorted even the most basic primate social qualities into nearly unrecognizable forms. Individual species of Old World monkeys and apes have notably plastic social organizations; man has extended the trend into a protean ethnicity. Monkeys and apes utilize behavioral scaling to adjust aggressive and sexual interactions; in man the scales have become multidimensional, culturally adjustable, and almost endlessly subtle. Bonding and the practices of reciprocal altruism are rudimentary in other primates; man has expanded them into great networks where individuals consciously alter roles from hour to hour as if changing masks.

It is the task of comparative sociobiology to trace these and other human qualities as closely as possible back through time. Besides adding perspective and perhaps offering some sense of philosophical ease, the exercise will help to identify the behaviors and rules by which individual human beings increase their Darwinian fitness through the manipulation of society. In a phrase, we are searching for the human biogram (Court, 1958; Tiger and Fox, 1971). One of the key questions, never far from the thinking of anthropologists and biologists who pursue real theory, is to what extent the biogram represents an adaptation to modern cultural life and to what extent it is a phylogenetic vestige. Our civilizations were jerrybuilt around the biogram. How have they been influenced by it? Conversely, how much flexibility is there in the biogram, and in which parameters particularly? Experience with other animals indicates that when organs are hypertrophied, phylogeny is hard to reconstruct. This is the crux of the problem of the evolutionary analysis of human behavior. In the remainder of the chapter, human qualities will be discussed insofar as they appear to be general traits of the species. Then current knowledge of the evolution of the biogram will be reviewed, and finally some implications for the planning of future societies will be considered.

### Plasticity of Social Organization

The first and most easily verifiable diagnostic trait is statistical in nature. The parameters of social organization, including group size, properties of hierarchies, and rates of gene exchange, vary far more among human populations than among those of any other primate species. The variation exceeds even that occurring between the remaining primate species. Some increase in plasticity is to be expected. It represents the extrapolation of a trend toward variability already apparent in the baboons, chimpanzees, and other cercopithecoids. What is truly surprising, however, is the extreme to which it has been carried.

Why are human societies this flexible? Part of the reason is that

the members themselves vary so much in behavior and achievement. Even in the simplest societies individuals differ greatly. Within a small tribe of !Kung Bushmen can be found individuals who are acknowledged as the "best people"--the leaders and outstanding specialists among the hunters and healers. Even with an emphasis on sharing goods, some are exceptionally able entrepreneurs and unostentatiously acquire a certain amount of wealth. !Kung men, no less than men in advanced industrial societies, generally establish themselves by their mid-thirties or else accept a lesser status for life. There are some who never try to make it, live in run-down huts, and show little pride in themselves or their work (Pfeiffer, 1969). The ability to slip into such roles, shaping one's personality to fit, may itself be adaptive. Human societies are organized by high intelligence, and each member is faced by a mixture of social challenges that taxes all of his ingenuity. This baseline variation is amplified at the group level by other qualities exceptionally pronounced in human societies: the long, close period of socialization; the loose connectedness of the communication networks; the multiplicity of bonds; the capacity, especially within literate cultures, to communicate over long distances and periods of history; and from all these traits, the capacity to dissemble, to manipulate, and to exploit. Each parameter can be altered easily, and each has a marked effect on the final social structure. The result could be the observed variation among societies.

The hypothesis to consider, then, is that genes promoting flexibility in social behavior are strongly selected at the individual level. But note that variation in social organization is only a possible, not a necessary consequence of this process. In order to generate the amount of variation actually observed to occur, it is necessary for there to be multiple adaptive peaks. In other words, different forms of society within the same species must be nearly enough alike in survival ability for many to enjoy long tenure. The result would be a statistical ensemble of kinds of societies which, if not equilibrial, is at least not shifting rapidly toward one particular mode or another. The alternative, found in some social insects, is flexibility in individual behavior and caste development, which nevertheless results in an approach toward uniformity in the statistical distribution of the kinds of individuals when all individuals within a colony are taken together. In honeybees and in ants of the genera *Formica* and *Pogonomyrmex*, "personality" differences are strongly marked even within single castes. Some individuals, referred to by entomologists as the elites, are unusually active, perform more than their share of lifetime work, and incite others to work through facilitation. Other colony members are consistently sluggish. Although they are seemingly healthy and live long lives, their per-individual output is only a small fraction of that of the elites. Specialization also occurs. Certain individuals remain with the brood as nurses far longer than the average, while others concentrate on nest building or foraging. Yet somehow

the total pattern of behavior in the colony converges on the species average. When one colony with its hundreds or thousands of members is compared with another of the same species, the statistical patterns of activity are about the same. We know that some of this consistency is due to negative feedback. As one requirement such as brood care or nest repair intensifies, workers shift their activities to compensate until the need is met, then change back again. Experiments have shown that disruption of the feedback loops, and thence deviation by the colony from the statistical norms, can be disastrous. It is therefore not surprising to find that the loops are both precise and powerful (Wilson, 1971a).

The controls governing human societies are not nearly so strong, and the effects of deviation are not so dangerous. The anthropological literature abounds with examples of societies that contain obvious inefficiencies and even pathological flaws—yet endure. The slave society of Jamaica, compellingly described by Orlando Patterson (1967), was unquestionably pathological by the moral canons of civilized life. "What marks it out is the astonishing neglect and distortion of almost every one of the basic prerequisites of normal human living. This was a society in which clergymen were the 'most finished debauchees' in the land; in which the institution of marriage was officially condemned among both masters and slaves; in which the family was unthinkable to the vast majority of the population and promiscuity the norm; in which education was seen as an absolute waste of time and teachers shunned like the plague; in which the legal system was quite deliberately a travesty of anything that could be called justice; and in which all forms of refinements, of art, of folkways, were either absent or in a state of total disintegration. Only a small proportion of whites, who monopolized almost all of the fertile land in the island, benefited from the system. And these, no sooner had they secured their fortunes, abandoned the land which the production of their own wealth had made unbearable to live in, for the comforts of the mother country." Yet this Hobbesian world lasted for nearly two centuries. The people multiplied while the economy flourished.

The Ik of Uganda are an equally instructive case (Turnbull, 1972). They are former hunters who have made a disastrous shift to cultivation. Always on the brink of starvation, they have seen their culture reduced to a vestige. Their only stated value is *ngag*, or food; their basic notion of goodness (*marangik*) is the individual possession of food in the stomach; and their definition of a good man is *yakw ana marang*, "a man who has a full belly." Villages are still built, but the nuclear family has ceased to function as an institution. Children are kept with reluctance and from about three years of age are made to find their own way of life. Marriage ordinarily occurs only when there is a specific need for cooperation. Because of the lack of energy, sexual activity is minimal and its pleasures are con-

sidered to be about on the same level as those of defecation. Death is treated with relief or amusement, since it means more *ngag* for survivors. Because the unfortunate *Ik* are at the lowest sustainable level, there is a temptation to conclude that they are doomed. Yet somehow their society has remained intact and more or less stable for at least 30 years, and it could endure indefinitely.

How can such variation in social structure persist? The explanation may be lack of competition from other species, resulting in what biologists call ecological release. During the past ten thousand years or longer, man as a whole has been so successful in dominating his environment that almost any kind of culture can succeed for a while, so long as it has a modest degree of internal consistency and does not shut off reproduction altogether. No species of ant or termite enjoys this freedom. The slightest inefficiency in constructing nests, in establishing odor trails, or in conducting nuptial flights could result in the quick extinction of the species by predation and competition from other social insects. To a scarcely lesser extent the same is true for social carnivores and primates. In short, animal species tend to be tightly packed in the ecosystem with little room for experimentation or play. Man has temporarily escaped the constraint of interspecific competition. Although cultures replace one another, the process is much less effective than interspecific competition in reducing variance.

It is part of the conventional wisdom that virtually all cultural variation is phenotypic rather than genetic in origin. This view has gained support from the ease with which certain aspects of culture can be altered in the space of a single generation, too quickly to be evolutionary in nature. The drastic alteration in Irish society in the first two years of the potato blight (1846-1848) is a case in point. Another is the shift in the Japanese authority structure during the American occupation following World War II. Such examples can be multiplied endlessly—they are the substance of history. It is also true that human populations are not very different from one another genetically. When Lewontin (1972b) analyzed existing data on nine blood-type systems, he found that 85 percent of the variance was composed of diversity within populations and only 15 percent was due to diversity between populations. There is no *a priori* reason for supposing that this sample of genes possesses a distribution much different from those of other, less accessible systems affecting behavior.

The extreme orthodox view of environmentalism goes further, holding that in effect there is no genetic variance in the transmission of culture. In other words, the capacity for culture is transmitted by a single human genotype. Dobzhansky (1963) stated this hypothesis as follows: "Culture is not inherited through genes, it is acquired by learning from other human beings . . . In a sense, human genes have surrendered their primacy in human evolution to an entirely new,

nonbiological or superorganic agent, culture. However, it should not be forgotten that this agent is entirely dependent on the human genotype." Although the genes have given away most of their sovereignity, they maintain a certain amount of influence in at least the behavioral qualities that underlie variations between cultures. Moderately high heritability has been documented in introversion-extroversion measures, personal tempo, psychomotor and sports activities, neuroticism, dominance, depression, and the tendency toward certain forms of mental illness such as schizophrenia (Parsons, 1967; Lerner, 1968). Even a small portion of this variance invested in population differences might predispose societies toward cultural differences. At the very least, we should try to measure this amount. It is not valid to point to the absence of a behavioral trait in one or a few societies as conclusive evidence that the trait is environmentally induced and has no genetic disposition in man. The very opposite could be true.

In short, there is a need for a discipline of anthropological genetics. In the interval before we acquire it, it should be possible to characterize the human biogram by two indirect methods. First, models can be constructed from the most elementary rules of human behavior. Insofar as they can be tested, the rules will characterize the biogram in much the same way that ethograms drawn by zoologists identify the "typical" behavioral repertoires of animal species. The rules can be legitimately compared with the ethograms of other primate species. Variation in the rules among human cultures, however slight, might provide clues to underlying genetic differences, particularly when it is correlated with variation in behavioral traits known to be heritable. Social scientists have in fact begun to take this first approach, although in a different context from the one suggested here. Abraham Maslow (1954, 1972) postulated that human beings respond to a hierarchy of needs, such that the lower levels must be satisfied before much attention is devoted to the higher ones. The most basic needs are hunger and sleep. When these are met, safety becomes the primary consideration, then the need to belong to a group and receive love, next self-esteem, and finally self-actualization and creativity. The ideal society in Maslow's dream is one which "fosters the fullest development of human potentials, of the fullest degree of humanness." When the biogram is freely expressed, its center of gravity should come to rest in the higher levels. A second social scientist, George C. Homans (1961), has adopted a Skinnerian approach in an attempt to reduce human behavior to the basic processes of associative learning. The rules he postulates are the following:

1. If in the past the occurrence of a particular stimulus-situation has been the occasion on which a man's activity has been rewarded, then the more similar the present stimulus-situation is to the past one, the more likely the man is at the present time to emit this activity or one similar to it.

2. The more often within a given period of time a man's activity rewards the behavior of another, the more often the other will perform the behavior.

3. The more valuable to a man a unit of the activity another gives him, the more often he behaves in the manner rewarded by the activity of the other.

4. The more often a man has in the recent past received a rewarding activity from another, the less valuable any further unit of that activity becomes to him.

Maslow the ethologist and visionary seems a world apart from Homans the behaviorist and reductionist. Yet their approaches are reconcilable. Homans' rules can be viewed as comprising some of the enabling devices by which the human biogram is expressed. His operational word is *reward*, which is in fact the set of all interactions defined by the emotive centers of the brain as desirable. According to evolutionary theory, desirability is measured in units of genetic fitness, and the emotive centers have been programmed accordingly. Maslow's hierarchy is simply the order of priority in the goals toward which the rules are directed.

The other indirect approach to anthropological genetics is through phylogenetic analysis. By comparing man with other primate species, it might be possible to identify basic primate traits that lie beneath the surface and help to determine the configuration of man's higher social behavior. This approach has been taken with great style and vigor in a series of popular books by Konrad Lorenz (*On Aggression*), Robert Ardrey (*The Social Contract*), Desmond Morris (*The Naked Ape*), and Lionel Tiger and Robin Fox (*The Imperial Animal*). Their efforts were salutary in calling attention to man's status as a biological species adapted to particular environments. The wide attention they received broke the stifling grip of the extreme behaviorists, whose view of the mind of man as a virtually equipotent response machine was neither correct nor heuristic. But their particular handling of the problem tended to be inefficient and misleading. They selected one plausible hypothesis or another based on a review of a small sample of animal species, then advocated the explanation to the limit. The weakness of this method was discussed earlier in a more general context (Chapter 2) and does not need repetition here.

The correct approach using comparative ethology is to base a rigorous phylogeny of closely related species on many biological traits. Then social behavior is treated as the dependent variable and its evolution deduced from it. When this cannot be done with confidence (and it cannot in man) the next best procedure is the one outlined in Chapter 7: establish the lowest taxonomic level at which each character shows significant intertaxon variation. Characters that shift from species to species or genus to genus are the most labile. We cannot safely extrapolate them from the cercopithecoid monkeys

and apes to man. In the primates these labile qualities include group size, group cohesiveness, openness of the group to others, involvement of the male in parental care, attention structure, and the intensity and form of territorial defense. Characters are considered conservative if they remain constant at the level of the taxonomic family or throughout the order Primates, and they are the ones most likely to have persisted in relatively unaltered form into the evolution of *Homo*. These conservative traits include aggressive dominance systems, with males generally dominant over females; scaling in the intensity of responses, especially during aggressive interactions; intensive and prolonged maternal care, with a pronounced degree of socialization in the young; and matrilineal social organization. This classification of behavioral traits offers an appropriate basis for hypothesis formation. It allows a qualitative assessment of the probabilities that various behavioral traits have persisted into modern *Homo sapiens*. The possibility of course remains that some labile traits are homologous between man and, say, the chimpanzee. And conversely, some traits conservative throughout the rest of the primates might nevertheless have changed during the origin of man. Furthermore, the assessment is not meant to imply that conservative traits are more genetic—that is, have higher heritability—than labile ones. Lability can be based wholly on genetic differences between species or populations within species. Returning finally to the matter of cultural evolution, we can heuristically conjecture that the traits proven to be labile are also the ones most likely to differ from one human society to another on the basis of genetic differences. The evidence, reviewed in Table 27-1, is not inconsistent with this basic conception. Finally, it is worth special note that the comparative ethological approach does not in any way predict man's unique traits. It is a general rule of evolutionary studies that the direction of quantum jumps is not easily read by phylogenetic extrapolation.

### Barter and Reciprocal Altruism

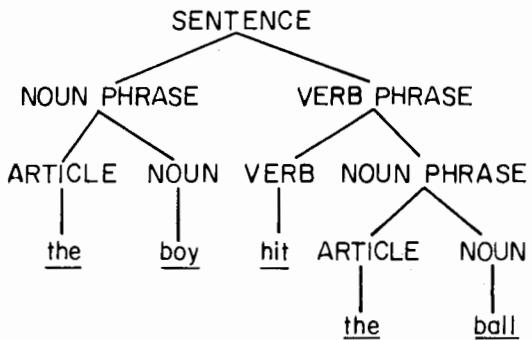
Sharing is rare among the nonhuman primates. It occurs in rudimentary form only in the chimpanzee and perhaps a few other Old World monkeys and apes. But in man it is one of the strongest social traits, reaching levels that match the intense trophallactic exchanges of termites and ants. As a result only man has an economy. His high intelligence and symbolizing ability make true barter possible. Intelligence also permits the exchanges to be stretched out in time, converting them into acts of reciprocal altruism (Trivers, 1971). The conventions of this mode of behavior are expressed in the familiar utterances of everyday life:

"Give me some now, I'll repay you later."

## RULES OF PHRASE STRUCTURE GRAMMAR

1. SENTENCE → NOUN PHRASE + VERB PHRASE
2. NOUN PHRASE → ARTICLE + NOUN
3. VERB PHRASE → VERB + NOUN PHRASE
4. ARTICLE → the, a
5. NOUN → boy, girl, ball
6. VERB → hit

## TREE OF PHRASE STRUCTURES



**Figure 27-3** An example of the rules of phrase structure grammar in the English language. The simple sentence "The boy hit the ball" is seen to consist of a hierarchy of phrases. At each level one phrase can be substituted for another of equivalent composition, but the phrases cannot be split and their elements interchanged. (Based on Slobin, 1971.)

to be adequate, however, to choose between hypotheses two and three, in other words to decide whether the grammars are innately programmed or whether they are learned. The basic operations of transformation occur in all known human languages. However, this observation by itself does not establish that the precise rules of transformation are the same.

Is there a universal grammar? This question is difficult to answer because most attempts to generalize the rules of deep grammar have been based on the semantic content of one particular language. Students of the subject seldom confront the problem as if it were genuinely scientific, in a way that would reveal how concrete and soluble it might be. In fact, natural scientists are easily frustrated by the diffuse, oblique quality of much of the psycholinguistic literature, which often seems unconcerned with the usual canons of proposition and evidence. The reason is that many of the writers, including Chomsky, are structuralists in the tradition of Lévi-Strauss and Piaget.

They approach the subject with the implicit world view that the processes of the human mind are indeed structured, and also discrete, enumerable, and evolutionarily unique with no great need to be referred to the formulations of other scientific disciplines. The analysis is nontheoretical in the sense that it fails to argue from postulates that can be tested and extended empirically. Some psychologists, including Roger Brown and his associates and Fodor and Garrett (1966), have adduced testable propositions and pursued them with mixed results, but the trail of speculation on deep grammar has not been easy to follow even for these skillful experimentalists.

Like poet naturalists, the structuralists celebrate idiosyncratic personal visions. They argue from hidden premises, relying largely on metaphor and exemplification, and with little regard for the method of multiple competing hypotheses. Clearly, this discipline, one of the most important in all of science, is ripe for the application of rigorous theory and properly meshed experimental investigation.

A key question that the new linguistics may never answer is when human language originated. Did speech appear with the first use of stone tools and the construction of shelters by the *Australopithecus* man-apes, over two million years ago? Or did it await the emergence of fully modern *Homo sapiens*, perhaps even the development of religious rites in the past 100,000 years? Lieberman (1968) believes that the date was relatively recent. He interprets the Makapan *Australopithecus* restored by Dart to fall close to the chimpanzee in the form of its palate and pharyngeal tract. If he is right, this early hominid might not have been able to articulate the sounds of human speech. The same conclusion has been drawn with respect to the anatomy and vocal capacity of the Neanderthal man (Lieberman et al., 1972), which if true places the origin of language in the latest stages of speciation in the genus *Homo*. Other theoretical aspects of the evolutionary origin of human speech have been discussed by Jane Hill (1972) and I. G. Mattingly (1972). Lenneberg (1971) has hypothesized that the capacity for mathematical reasoning originated as a slight modification of linguistic ability.

## **Culture, Ritual, and Religion**

The rudiments of culture are possessed by higher primates other than man, including the Japanese monkey and chimpanzee (Chapter 7), but only in man has culture thoroughly infiltrated virtually every aspect of life. Ethnographic detail is genetically underprescribed, resulting in great amounts of diversity among societies. Underprescription does not mean that culture has been freed from the genes. What has evolved is the capacity for culture, indeed the overwhelming tendency to develop one culture or another. Robin Fox (1971) put the argument in the following form. If the proverbial experiments

of the pharaoh Psammetichos and James IV of Scotland had worked, and children reared in isolation somehow survived in good health,

I do not doubt that they could speak and that, theoretically, given time, they or their offspring would invent and develop a language despite their never having been taught one. Furthermore, this language, although totally different from any known to us, would be analyzable by linguists on the same basis as other languages and translatable into all known languages. But I would push this further. If our new Adam and Eve could survive and breed—still in total isolation from any cultural influences—then eventually they would produce a society which would have laws about property, rules about incest and marriage, customs of taboo and avoidance, methods of settling disputes with a minimum of bloodshed, beliefs about the supernatural and practices relating to it, a system of social status and methods of indicating it, initiation ceremonies for young men, courtship practices including the adornment of females, systems of symbolic body adornment generally, certain activities and associations set aside for men from which women were excluded, gambling of some kind, a tool- and weapon-making industry, myths and legends, dancing, adultery, and various doses of homicide, suicide, homosexuality, schizophrenia, psychosis and neuroses, and various practitioners to take advantage of or cure these, depending on how they are viewed.

Culture, including the more resplendent manifestations of ritual and religion, can be interpreted as a hierarchical system of environmental tracking devices. In Chapter 7 the totality of biological responses, from millisecond-quick biochemical reactions to gene substitutions requiring generations, was described as such a system. At that time culture was placed within the scheme at the slow end of the time scale. Now this conception can be extended. To the extent that the specific details of culture are nongenetic, they can be decoupled from the biological system and arrayed beside it as an auxiliary system. The span of the purely cultural tracking system parallels much of the slower segment of the biological tracking system, ranging from days to generations. Among the fastest cultural responses in industrial civilizations are fashions in dress and speech. Somewhat slower are political ideology and social attitudes toward other nations, while the slowest of all include incest taboos and the belief or disbelief in particular high gods. It is useful to hypothesize that cultural details are for the most part adaptive in a Darwinian sense, even though some may operate indirectly through enhanced group survival (Washburn and Howell, 1960; Masters, 1970). A second proposition worth considering, to make the biological analogy complete, is that the rate of change in a particular set of cultural behaviors reflects the rate of change in the environmental features to which the behaviors are keyed.

Slowly changing forms of culture tend to be encapsulated in ritual. Some social scientists have drawn an analogy between human ceremonies and the displays of animal communication. This is not correct. Most animal displays are discrete signals conveying limited

meaning. They are commensurate with the postures, facial expressions, and elementary sounds of human paralanguage. A few animal displays, such as the most complex forms of sexual advertisement and nest changing in birds, are so impressively elaborate that they have occasionally been termed ceremonies by zoologists. But even here the comparison is misleading. Most human rituals have more than just an immediate signal value. As Durkheim stressed, they not only label but reaffirm and rejuvenate the moral values of the community.

The sacred rituals are the most distinctively human. Their most elementary forms are concerned with magic, the active attempt to manipulate nature and the gods. Upper Paleolithic art from the caves of Western Europe shows a preoccupation with game animals. There are many scenes showing spears and arrows embedded in the bodies of the prey. Other drawings depict men dancing in animal disguises or standing with heads bowed in front of animals. Probably the function of the drawings was sympathetic magic, based on the quite logical notion that what is done with an image will come to pass with the real thing. This anticipatory action is comparable to the intention movements of animals, which in the course of evolution have often been ritualized into communicative signals. The waggle dance of the honeybee, it will be recalled, is a miniaturized rehearsal of the flight from the nest to the food. Primitive man might have understood the meaning of such complex animal behavior easily. Magic was, and still is in some societies, practiced by special people variously called shamans, sorcerers, or medicine men. They alone were believed to have the secret knowledge and power to deal effectively with the supernatural, and as such their influence sometimes exceeded that of the tribal headmen.

Formal religion *sensu stricto* has many elements of magic but is focused on deeper, more tribally oriented beliefs. Its rites celebrate the creation myths, propitiate the gods, and resanctify the tribal moral codes. Instead of a shaman controlling physical power, there is a priest who communes with the gods and curries their favor through obeisance, sacrifice, and the proffered evidences of tribal good behavior. In more complex societies, polity and religion have always blended naturally. Power belonged to kings by divine right, but high priests often ruled over kings by virtue of the higher rank of the gods.

It is a reasonable hypothesis that magic and totemism constituted direct adaptations to the environment and preceded formal religion in social evolution. Sacred traditions occur almost universally in human societies. So do myths that explain the origin of man or at the very least the relation of the tribe to the rest of the world. But belief in high gods is not universal. Among 81 hunter-gatherer societies surveyed by Whiting (1968), only 28, or 35 percent, included high gods in their sacred traditions. The concept of an active, moral God who created the world is even less widespread. Furthermore, this concept most commonly arises with a pastoral way of life. The greater

**Table 27-3** The religious beliefs of 66 agrarian societies, partitioned according to the percentage of subsistence derived from herding. (From *Human Societies* by G. and Jean Lenski. Copyright © 1970 by McGraw-Hill Book Company. Used with permission.)

Percentage of subsistence from herding	Percentage of societies believing in an active, moral creator God	Number of societies
36-45	92	13
26-35	82	28
16-25	40	20
6-15	20	5

the dependence on herding, the more likely the belief in a shepherd god of the Judaeo-Christian model (see Table 27-3). In other kinds of societies the belief occurs in 10 percent or less of the cases. Also, the God of monotheistic religions is always male. This strong patriarchal tendency has several cultural sources (Lenski, 1970). Pastoral societies are highly mobile, tightly organized, and often militant, all features that tip the balance toward male authority. It is also significant that herding, the main economic base, is primarily the responsibility of men. Because the Hebrews were originally a herding people, the Bible describes God as a shepherd and the chosen people as his sheep. Islam, one of the strictest of all monotheistic faiths, grew to early power among the herding people of the Arabian peninsula. The intimate relation of the shepherd to his flock apparently provides a microcosm which stimulates deeper questioning about the relation of man to the powers that control him.

An increasingly sophisticated anthropology has not given reason to doubt Max Weber's conclusion that more elementary religions seek the supernatural for the purely mundane rewards of long life, abundant land and food, the avoidance of physical catastrophes, and the defeat of enemies. A form of group selection also operates in the competition between sects. Those that gain adherents survive; those that cannot, fail. Consequently, religions, like other human institutions, evolve so as to further the welfare of their practitioners. Because this demographic benefit applies to the group as a whole, it can be gained in part by altruism and exploitation, with certain segments profiting at the expense of others. Alternatively, it can arise as the sum of generally increased individual fitnesses. The resulting distinction in social terms is between the more oppressive and the more beneficent religions. All religions are probably oppressive to some degree, especially when they are promoted by chiefdoms and states. The tendency is intensified when societies compete, since religion can be effectively harnessed to the purposes of warfare and economic exploitation.

The enduring paradox of religion is that so much of its substance

is demonstrably false, yet it remains a driving force in all societies. Men would rather believe than know, have the void as purpose, as Nietzsche said, than be void of purpose. At the turn of the century Durkheim rejected the notion that such force could really be extracted from "a tissue of illusions." And since that time social scientists have sought the psychological Rosetta stone that might clarify the deeper truths of religious reasoning. In a penetrating analysis of this subject, Rappaport (1971) proposed that virtually all forms of sacred rites serve the purposes of communication. In addition to institutionalizing the moral values of the community, the ceremonies can offer information on the strength and wealth of tribes and families. Among the Maring of New Guinea there are no chiefs or other leaders who command allegiance in war. A group gives a ritual dance, and individual men indicate their willingness to give military support by whether they attend the dance or not. The strength of the consortium can then be precisely determined by a head count. In more advanced societies military parades, embellished by the paraphernalia and rituals of the state religion, serve the same purpose. The famous potlatch ceremonies of the Northwest Coast Indians enable individuals to advertise their wealth by the amount of goods they give away. Rituals also regularize relationships in which there would otherwise be ambiguity and wasteful imprecision. The best examples of this mode of communication are the *rites de passage*. As a boy matures his transition from child to man is very gradual in a biological and psychological sense. There will be times when he behaves like a child when an adult response would have been more appropriate, and vice versa. The society has difficulty in classifying him one way or the other. The *rite de passage* eliminates this ambiguity by arbitrarily changing the classification from a continuous gradient into a dichotomy. It also serves to cement the ties of the young person to the adult group that accepts him.

To sanctify a procedure or a statement is to certify it as beyond question and imply punishment for anyone who dares to contradict it. So removed is the sacred from the profane in everyday life that simply to repeat it in the wrong circumstance is a transgression. This extreme form of certification, the heart of all religions, is granted to the practices and dogmas that serve the most vital interests of the group. The individual is prepared by the sacred rituals for supreme effort and self-sacrifice. Overwhelmed by shibboleths, special costumes, and the sacred dancing and music so accurately keyed to his emotive centers he has a "religious experience." He is ready to reassert allegiance to his tribe and family, perform charities, consecrate his life, leave for the hunt, join the battle, die for God and country. *Deus vult* was the rallying cry of the First Crusade. God wills it, but the summed Darwinian fitness of the tribe was the ultimate if unrecognized beneficiary.

It was Henri Bergson who first identified a second force leading

to the formalization of morality and religion. The extreme plasticity of human social behavior is both a great strength and a real danger. If each family worked out rules of behavior on its own, the result would be an intolerable amount of tradition drift and growing chaos. To counteract selfish behavior and the "dissolving power" of high intelligence, each society must codify itself. Within broad limits virtually any set of conventions works better than none at all. Because arbitrary codes work, organizations tend to be inefficient and marred by unnecessary inequities. As Rappaport succinctly expressed it, "Sanctification transforms the arbitrary into the necessary, and regulatory mechanisms which are arbitrary are likely to be sanctified." The process engenders criticism, and in the more literate and self-conscious societies visionaries and revolutionaries set out to change the system. Reform meets repression, because to the extent that the rules have been sanctified and mythologized, the majority of the people regard them as beyond question, and disagreement is defined as blasphemy.

This leads us to the essentially biological question of the evolution of indoctrinability (Campbell, 1972). Human beings are absurdly easy to indoctrinate—they seek it. If we assume for argument that indoctrinability evolves, at what level does natural selection take place? One extreme possibility is that the group is the unit of selection. When conformity becomes too weak, groups become extinct. In this version selfish, individualistic members gain the upper hand and multiply at the expense of others. But their rising prevalence accelerates the vulnerability of the society and hastens its extinction. Societies containing higher frequencies of conformer genes replace those that disappear, thus raising the overall frequency of the genes in the metapopulation of societies. The spread of the genes will occur more rapidly if the metapopulation (for example, a tribal complex) is simultaneously enlarging its range. Formal models of the process, presented in Chapter 5, show that if the rate of societal extinction is high enough relative to the intensity of the counteracting individual selection, the altruistic genes can rise to moderately high levels. The genes might be of the kind that favors indoctrinability even at the expense of the individuals who submit. For example, the willingness to risk death in battle can favor group survival at the expense of the genes that permitted the fatal military discipline. The group-selection hypothesis is sufficient to account for the evolution of indoctrinability.

The competing, individual-level hypothesis is equally sufficient. It states that the ability of individuals to conform permits them to enjoy the benefits of membership with a minimum of energy expenditure and risk. Although their selfish rivals may gain a momentary advantage, it is lost in the long run through ostracism and repression. The conformists perform altruistic acts, perhaps even to the extent of risking their lives, not because of self-denying genes selected at

the group level but because the group is occasionally able to take advantage of the indoctrinability which on other occasions is favorable to the individual.

The two hypotheses are not mutually exclusive. Group and individual selection can be reinforcing. If war requires spartan virtues and eliminates some of the warriors, victory can more than adequately compensate the survivors in land, power, and the opportunity to reproduce. The average individual will win the inclusive fitness game, making the gamble profitable, because the summed efforts of the participants give the average member a more than compensatory edge.

## Ethics

Scientists and humanists should consider together the possibility that the time has come for ethics to be removed temporarily from the hands of the philosophers and biologized. The subject at present consists of several oddly disjunct conceptualizations. The first is *ethical intuitionism*, the belief that the mind has a direct awareness of true right and wrong that it can formalize by logic and translate into rules of social action. The purest guiding precept of secular Western thought has been the theory of the social contract as formulated by Locke, Rousseau, and Kant. In our time the precept has been rewoven into a solid philosophical system by John Rawls (1971). His imperative is that justice should be not merely integral to a system of government but rather the object of the original contract. The principles called by Rawls "justice as fairness" are those which free and rational persons would choose if they were beginning an association from a position of equal advantage and wished to define the fundamental rules of the association. In judging the appropriateness of subsequent laws and behavior, it would be necessary to test their conformity to the unchallengeable starting position.

The Achilles heel of the intuitionist position is that it relies on the emotive judgment of the brain as though that organ must be treated as a black box. While few will disagree that justice as fairness is an ideal state for disembodied spirits, the conception is in no way explanatory or predictive with reference to human beings. Consequently, it does not consider the ultimate ecological or genetic consequences of the rigorous prosecution of its conclusions. Perhaps explanation and prediction will not be needed for the millennium. But this is unlikely—the human genotype and the ecosystem in which it evolved were fashioned out of extreme unfairness. In either case the full exploration of the neural machinery of ethical judgment is desirable and already in progress. One such effort, constituting the second mode of conceptualization, can be called *ethical behaviorism*. Its basic proposition, which has been expanded most fully by J. P. Scott (1971), holds that moral commitment is entirely learned, with

operant conditioning being the dominant mechanism. In other words, children simply internalize the behavioral norms of the society. Opposing this theory is the *developmental-genetic conception* of ethical behavior. The best-documented version has been provided by Lawrence Kohlberg (1969). Kohlberg's viewpoint is structuralist and specifically Piagetian, and therefore not yet related to the remainder of biology. Piaget has used the expression "genetic epistemology" and Kohlberg "cognitive-developmental" to label the general concept. However, the results will eventually become incorporated into a broadened developmental biology and genetics. Kohlberg's method is to record and classify the verbal responses of children to moral problems. He has delineated six sequential stages of ethical reasoning through which an individual may progress as part of his mental maturation. The child moves from a primary dependence on external controls and sanctions to an increasingly sophisticated set of internalized standards (see Table 27-4). The analysis has not yet been directed to the question of plasticity in the basic rules. Intracultural variance has not been measured, and heritability therefore not assessed. The

**Table 27-4** The classification of moral judgment into levels and stages of development. (Based on Kohlberg, 1969.)

Level	Basis of moral judgment	Stage of development
I	Moral value is defined by punishment and reward	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Obedience to rules and authority to avoid punishment</li> <li>Conformity to obtain rewards and to exchange favors</li> <li>Good-boy orientation: conformity to avoid dislike and rejection by others</li> <li>Duty orientation: conformity to avoid censure by authority, disruption of order, and resulting guilt</li> <li>Legalistic orientation: recognition of the value of contracts, some arbitrariness in rule formation to maintain the common good</li> <li>Conscience or principle orientation: primary allegiance to principles of choice, which can overrule law in cases where the law is judged to do more harm than good</li> </ol>
II	Moral value resides in filling the correct roles, in maintaining order and meeting the expectations of others	
III	Moral value resides in conformity to shared standards, rights, and duties	

difference between ethical behaviorism and the current version of developmental-genetic analysis is that the former postulates a mechanism (operant conditioning) without evidence and the latter presents evidence without postulating a mechanism. No great conceptual difficulty underlies this disparity. The study of moral development is only a more complicated and less tractable version of the genetic variance problem (see Chapters 2 and 7). With the accretion of data the two approaches can be expected to merge to form a recognizable exercise in behavioral genetics.

Even if the problem were solved tomorrow, however, an important piece would still be missing. This is the *genetic evolution of ethics*. In the first chapter of this book I argued that ethical philosophers intuit the deontological canons of morality by consulting the emotive centers of their own hypothalamic-limbic system. This is also true of the developmentalists, even when they are being their most severely objective. Only by interpreting the activity of the emotive centers as a biological adaptation can the meaning of the canons be deciphered. Some of the activity is likely to be outdated, a relic of adjustment to the most primitive form of tribal organization. Some of it may prove to be *in statu nascendi*, constituting new and quickly changing adaptations to agrarian and urban life. The resulting confusion will be reinforced by other factors. To the extent that unilaterally altruistic genes have been established in the population by group selection, they will be opposed by allelomorphs favored by individual selection. The conflict of impulses under their various controls is likely to be widespread in the population, since current theory predicts that the genes will be at best maintained in a state of balanced polymorphism (Chapter 5). Moral ambivalence will be further intensified by the circumstance that a schedule of sex- and age-dependent ethics can impart higher genetic fitness than a single moral code which is applied uniformly to all sex-age groups. The argument for this statement is the special case of the Gadgil-Bossert distribution in which the contributions of social interactions to survivorship and fertility schedules are specified (see Chapter 4). Some of the differences in the Kohlberg stages could be explained in this manner. For example, it should be of selective advantage for young children to be self-centered and relatively disinclined to perform altruistic acts based on personal principle. Similarly, adolescents should be more tightly bound by age-peer bonds within their own sex and hence unusually sensitive to peer approval. The reason is that at this time greater advantage accrues to the formation of alliances and rise in status than later, when sexual and parental morality become the paramount determinants of fitness. Genetically programmed sexual and parent-offspring conflict of the kind predicted by the Trivers models (Chapters 15 and 16) are also likely to promote age differences in the kinds and degrees of moral commitment. Finally, the moral standards of individuals during early phases of colony growth should

differ in many details from those of individuals at demographic equilibrium or during episodes of overpopulation. Metapopulations subject to high levels of extinction will tend to diverge genetically from other kinds of populations in ethical behavior (Chapter 5).

If there is any truth to this theory of innate moral pluralism, the requirement for an evolutionary approach to ethics is self-evident. It should also be clear that no single set of moral standards can be applied to all human populations, let alone all sex-age classes within each population. To impose a uniform code is therefore to create complex, intractable moral dilemmas—these, of course, are the current condition of mankind.

## Esthetics

Artistic impulses are by no means limited to man. In 1962, when Desmond Morris reviewed the subject in *The Biology of Art*, 32 individual nonhuman primates had produced drawings and paintings in captivity. Twenty-three were chimpanzees, 2 were gorillas, 3 were orangutans, and 4 were capuchin monkeys. None received special training or anything more than access to the necessary equipment. In fact, attempts to guide the efforts of the animals by inducing imitation were always unsuccessful. The drive to use the painting and drawing equipment was powerful, requiring no reinforcement from the human observers. Both young and old animals became so engrossed with the activity that they preferred it to being fed and sometimes threw temper tantrums when stopped. Two of the chimpanzees studied extensively were highly productive. "Alpha" produced over 200 pictures, while the famous "Congo," who deserves to be called the Picasso of the great apes, was responsible for nearly 400. Although most of the efforts consisted of scribbling, the patterns were far from random. Lines and smudges were spread over a blank page outward from a centrally located figure. When a drawing was started on one side of a blank page the chimpanzee usually shifted to the opposite side to offset it. With time the calligraphy became bolder, starting with simple lines and progressing to more complicated multiple scribbles. Congo's patterns progressed along approximately the same developmental path as those of very young human children, yielding fan-shaped diagrams and even complete circles. Other chimpanzees drew crosses.

The artistic activity of chimpanzees may well be a special manifestation of their tool-using behavior. Members of the species display a total of about ten techniques, all of which require manual skill. Probably all are improved through practice, while at least a few are passed as traditions from one generation to the next. The chimpanzees have a considerable facility for inventing new techniques, such as the use of sticks to pull objects through cage bars and to pry open boxes. Thus the tendency to manipulate objects and to explore their uses appears to have an adaptive advantage for chimpanzees.

The same reasoning applies a fortiori to the origin of art in man. As Washburn (1970) pointed out, human beings have been hunter-gatherers for over 99 percent of their history, during which time each man made his own tools. The appraisal of form and skill in execution were necessary for survival, and they probably brought social approval as well. Both forms of success paid off in greater genetic fitness. If the chimpanzee Congo could reach the stage of elementary diagrams, it is not too hard to imagine primitive man progressing to representational figures. Once that stage was reached, the transition to the use of art in sympathetic magic and ritual must have followed quickly. Art might then have played a reciprocally reinforcing role in the development of culture and mental capacity. In the end, writing emerged as the idiographic representation of language.

Music of a kind is also produced by some animals. Human beings consider the elaborate courtship and territorial songs of birds to be beautiful, and probably ultimately for the same reasons they are of use to the birds. With clarity and precision they identify the species, the physiological condition, and the mental set of the singer. Richness of information and precise transmission of mood are no less the standards of excellence in human music. Singing and dancing serve to draw groups together, direct the emotions of the people, and prepare them for joint action. The carnival displays of chimpanzees described in earlier chapters are remarkably like human celebrations in this respect. The apes run, leap, pound the trunks of trees in drumming motions, and call loudly back and forth. These actions serve at least in part to assemble groups at common feeding grounds. They may resemble the ceremonies of earliest man. Nevertheless, fundamental differences appeared in subsequent human evolution. Human music has been liberated from iconic representation in the same way that true language has departed from the elementary ritualization characterizing the communication of animals. Music has the capacity for unlimited and arbitrary symbolization, and it employs rules of phrasing and order that serve the same function as syntax.

## Territoriality and Tribalism

Anthropologists often discount territorial behavior as a general human attribute. This happens when the narrowest concept of the phenomenon is borrowed from zoology—the "stickleback model," in which residents meet along fixed boundaries to threaten and drive one another back. But earlier, in Chapter 12, I showed why it is necessary to define territory more broadly, as any area occupied more or less exclusively by an animal or group of animals through overt defense or advertisement. The techniques of repulsion can be as explicit as a precipitous all-out attack or as subtle as the deposit of a chemical secretion at a scent post. Of equal importance, animals respond to their neighbors in a highly variable manner. Each species is characterized by its own particular behavioral scale. In extreme

cases the scale may run from open hostility, say, during the breeding season or when the population density is high, to oblique forms of advertisement or no territorial behavior at all. One seeks to characterize the behavioral scale of the species and to identify the parameters that move individual animals up and down it.

If these qualifications are accepted, it is reasonable to conclude that territoriality is a general trait of hunter-gatherer societies. In a perceptive review of the evidence, Edwin Wilmsen (1973) found that these relatively primitive societies do not differ basically in their strategy of land tenure from many mammalian species. Systematic overt aggression has been reported in a minority of hunter-gatherer peoples, for example the Chippewa, Sioux, and Washo of North America and the Murngin and Tiwi of Australia. Spacing and demographic balance were implemented by raiding parties, murder, and threats of witchcraft. The Washo of Nevada actively defended nuclear portions of their home ranges, within which they maintained their winter residences. Subtler and less direct forms of interaction can have the same result. The !Kung Bushmen of the Nyae Nyae area refer to themselves as "perfect" or "clean" and other !Kung people as "strange" murderers who use deadly poisons.

Human territorial behavior is sometimes particularized in ways that are obviously functional. As recently as 1930 Bushmen of the Dobe area in southwestern Africa recognized the principle of exclusive family land-holdings during the wet season. The rights extended only to the gathering of vegetable foods; other bands were allowed to hunt animals through the area (R. B. Lee in Wilmsen, 1973). Other hunter-gatherer peoples appear to have followed the same dual principle: more or less exclusive use by tribes or families of the richest sources of vegetable foods, opposed to broadly overlapping hunting ranges. Thus the original suggestion of Bartholomew and Birdsall (1953) that *Australopithecus* and the primitive *Homo* were territorial remains a viable hypothesis. Moreover, in obedience to the rule of ecological efficiency, the home ranges and territories were probably large and population density correspondingly low. This rule, it will be recalled, states that when a diet consists of animal food, roughly ten times as much area is needed to gain the same amount of energy yield as when the diet consists of plant food. Modern hunter-gatherer bands containing about 25 individuals commonly occupy between 1000 and 3000 square kilometers. This area is comparable to the home range of a wolf pack but as much as a hundred times greater than that of a troop of gorillas, which are exclusively vegetarian.

Hans Kummer (1971), reasoning from an assumption of territoriality, provided an important additional insight about human behavior. Spacing between groups is elementary in nature and can be achieved by a relatively small number of simple aggressive techniques. Spacing and dominance within groups is vastly more complex, being tied to all the remainder of the social repertory. Part of man's problem is that his intergroup responses are still crude and primitive, and

inadequate for the extended extraterritorial relationships that civilization has thrust upon him. The unhappy result is what Garrett Hardin (1972) has defined as tribalism in the modern sense:

Any group of people that perceives itself as a distinct group, and which is so perceived by the outside world, may be called a tribe. The group might be a race, as ordinarily defined, but it need not be; it can just as well be a religious sect, a political group, or an occupational group. The essential characteristic of a tribe is that it should follow a double standard of morality—one kind of behavior for in-group relations, another for out-group.

It is one of the unfortunate and inescapable characteristics of tribalism that it eventually evokes counter-tribalism (or, to use a different figure of speech, it "polarizes" society).

Fearful of the hostile groups around them, the "tribe" refuses to concede to the common good. It is less likely to voluntarily curb its own population growth. Like the Sinhalese and Tamils of Ceylon, competitors may even race to outbreed each other. Resources are sequestered. Justice and liberty decline. Increases in real and imagined threats congeal the sense of group identity and mobilize the tribal members. Xenophobia becomes a political virtue. The treatment of nonconformists within the group grows harsher. History is replete with the escalation of this process to the point that the society breaks down or goes to war. No nation has been completely immune.

## Early Social Evolution

Modern man can be said to have been launched by a two-stage acceleration in mental evolution. The first occurred during the transition from a larger arboreal primate to the first man-apes (*Australopithecus*). If the primitive hominid *Ramapithecus* is in the direct line of ancestry, as current opinion holds, the change may have required as much as ten million years. *Australopithecus* was present five million years ago, and by three million years B.P. it had speciated into several forms, including possibly the first primitive *Homo* (Tobias, 1973). As shown in Figure 27-1, the evolution of these intermediate hominids was marked by an accelerating increase in brain capacity. Simultaneously, erect posture and a striding, bipedal locomotion were perfected, and the hands were molded to acquire the precision grip. These early men undoubtedly used tools to a much greater extent than do modern chimpanzees. Crude stone implements were made by chipping, and rocks were pulled together to form what appear to be the foundations of shelters.

The second, much more rapid phase of acceleration began about 100,000 years ago. It consisted primarily of cultural evolution and must have been mostly phenotypic in nature, building upon the genetic potential in the brain that had accumulated over the previous millions of years. The brain had reached a threshold, and a wholly new, enormously more rapid form of mental evolution took over.

push truly altruistic genes to a high frequency within the bands (see Chapter 5). The turnover of tribes and chiefdoms estimated from atlases of early European and Mideastern history (for example, the atlas by McEvedy, 1967) suggests a sufficient magnitude of differential group fitness to have achieved this effect. Furthermore, it is to be expected that some isolated cultures will escape the process for generations at a time, in effect reverting temporarily to what ethnographers classify as a pacific state.

### Multifactorial Systems

Each of the foregoing mechanisms could conceivably stand alone as a sufficient prime mover of social evolution. But it is much more likely that they contributed jointly, in different strengths and with complex interaction effects. Hence the most realistic model may be fully cybernetic, with cause and effect reciprocating through sub-cycles that possess high degrees of connectivity with one another. One such scheme, proposed by Adams (1966) for the rise of states and urban societies, is presented in Figure 27-8. Needless to say, the equations needed to translate this and similar models have not been written, and the magnitudes of the coefficients cannot even be guessed at the present time.

In both the unifactorial and multifactorial models of social evolution, an increasing internalization of the controls is postulated. This shift is considered to be the basis of the two-stage acceleration cited earlier. At the beginning of hominid evolution, the prime movers were external environmental pressures no different from those that have guided the social evolution of other animal species. For the moment, it seems reasonable to suppose that the hominids underwent two adaptive shifts in succession: first, to open-country living and seed eating, and second, after being preadapted by the anatomical and mental changes associated with seed eating, to the capture of

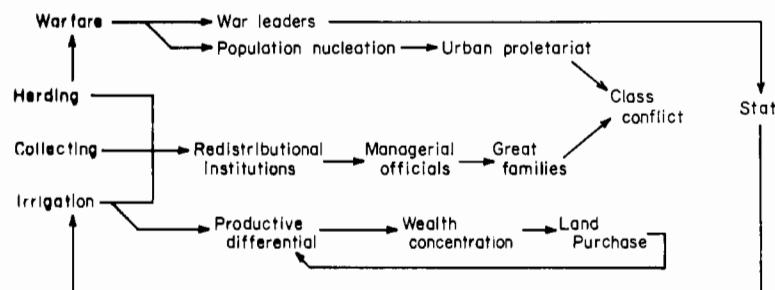
large mammals. Big-game hunting induced further growth in mentality and social organization that brought the hominids across the threshold into the autocatalytic, more nearly internalized phase of evolution. This second stage is the one in which the most distinctive human qualities emerged. In stressing this distinction, however, I do not wish to imply that social evolution became independent of the environment. The iron laws of demography still clamped down on the spreading hominid populations, and the most spectacular cultural advances were impelled by the invention of new ways to control the environment. What happened was that mental and social change came to depend more on internal reorganization and less on direct responses to features in the surrounding environment. Social evolution, in short, had acquired its own motor.

### The Future

When mankind has achieved an ecological steady state, probably by the end of the twenty-first century, the internalization of social evolution will be nearly complete. About this time biology should be at its peak, with the social sciences maturing rapidly. Some historians of science will take issue with this projection, arguing that the accelerating pace of discoveries in these fields implies a more rapid development. But historical precedents have misled us before: the subjects we are talking about are more difficult than physics or chemistry by at least two orders of magnitude.

Consider the prospects for sociology. This science is now in the natural history stage of its development. There have been attempts at system building but, just as in psychology, they were premature and came to little. Much of what passes for theory in sociology today is really labeling of phenomena and concepts, in the expected manner of natural history. Process is difficult to analyze because the fundamental units are elusive, perhaps nonexistent. Syntheses commonly consist of the tedious cross-referencing of differing sets of definitions and metaphors erected by the more imaginative thinkers (see for example Inkeles, 1964, and Friedrichs, 1970). That, too, is typical of the natural history phase.

With an increase in the richness of descriptions and experiments, sociology is drawing closer each day to cultural anthropology, social psychology, and economics, and will soon merge with them. These disciplines are fundamental to sociology *sensu lato* and are most likely to yield its first phenomenological laws. In fact, some viable qualitative laws probably already exist. They include tested statements about the following relationships: the effects of hostility and stress upon ethnocentrism and xenophobia (LeVine and Campbell, 1972), the positive correlation between and within cultures of war and combative sports, resulting in the elimination of the hydraulic model of aggressive drive (Sipes, 1973); precise but still specialized



**Figure 27-8** A multifactorial model of the origin of the state and urban society. (From Flannery, 1972, based on Adams, 1966. Reproduced, with permission, from "The Cultural Evolution of Civilizations," *Annual Review of Ecology and Systematics*, Vol. 3, p. 408. Copyright © 1972 by Annual Reviews, Inc. All rights reserved.)

models of promotion and opportunity within professional guilds (White, 1970), and, far from least, the most general models of economics.

The transition from purely phenomenological to fundamental theory in sociology must await a full, neuronal explanation of the human brain. Only when the machinery can be torn down on paper at the level of the cell and put together again will the properties of emotion and ethical judgment come clear. Simulations can then be employed to estimate the full range of behavioral responses and the precision of their homeostatic controls. Stress will be evaluated in terms of the neurophysiological perturbations and their relaxation times. Cognition will be translated into circuitry. Learning and creativeness will be defined as the alteration of specific portions of the cognitive machinery regulated by input from the emotive centers. Having cannibalized psychology, the new neurobiology will yield an enduring set of first principles for sociology.

The role of evolutionary sociobiology in this enterprise will be twofold. It will attempt to reconstruct the history of the machinery and to identify the adaptive significance of each of its functions. Some of the functions are almost certainly obsolete, being directed toward such Pleistocene exigencies as hunting and gathering and intertribal warfare. Others may prove currently adaptive at the level of the individual and family but maladaptive at the level of the group—or the reverse. If the decision is taken to mold cultures to fit the requirements of the ecological steady state, some behaviors can be altered experientially without emotional damage or loss in creativity. Others cannot. Uncertainty in this matter means that Skinner's dream of a culture predesigned for happiness will surely have to wait for the new neurobiology. A genetically accurate and hence completely fair code of ethics must also wait.

The second contribution of evolutionary sociobiology will be to monitor the genetic basis of social behavior. Optimum socioeconomic systems can never be perfect, because of Arrow's impossibility theorem and probably also because ethical standards are innately pluralistic. Moreover, the genetic foundation on which any such normative system is built can be expected to shift continuously. Mankind has never stopped evolving, but in a sense his populations are drifting. The effects over a period of a few generations could change the identity of the socioeconomic optima. In particular, the rate of

gene flow around the world has risen to dramatic levels and is accelerating, and the mean coefficients of relationship within local communities are correspondingly diminishing. The result could be an eventual lessening of altruistic behavior through the maladaptation and loss of group-selected genes (Haldane, 1932; Eshel, 1972). It was shown earlier that behavioral traits tend to be selected out by the principle of metabolic conservation when they are suppressed or when their original function becomes neutral in adaptive value. Such traits can largely disappear from populations in as few as ten generations, only two or three centuries in the case of human beings. With our present inadequate understanding of the human brain, we do not know how many of the most valued qualities are linked genetically to more obsolete, destructive ones. Cooperativeness toward groupmates might be coupled with aggressivity toward strangers, creativeness with a desire to own and dominate, athletic zeal with a tendency to violent response, and so on. In extreme cases such pairings could stem from pleiotropism, the control of more than one phenotypic character by the same set of genes. If the planned society—the creation of which seems inevitable in the coming century—were to deliberately steer its members past those stresses and conflicts that once gave the destructive phenotypes their Darwinian edge, the other phenotypes might dwindle with them. In this, the ultimate genetic sense, social control would rob man of his humanity.

It seems that our autocatalytic social evolution has locked us onto a particular course which the early hominids still within us may not welcome. To maintain the species indefinitely we are compelled to drive toward total knowledge, right down to the levels of the neuron and gene. When we have progressed enough to explain ourselves in these mechanistic terms, and the social sciences come to full flower, the result might be hard to accept. It seems appropriate therefore to close this book as it began, with the foreboding insight of Albert Camus:

A world that can be explained even with bad reasons is a familiar world. But, on the other hand, in a universe divested of illusions and lights, man feels an alien, a stranger. His exile is without remedy since he is deprived of the memory of a lost home or the hope of a promised land.

This, unfortunately, is true. But we still have another hundred years.