

some respect. If they were healthy, successful and therefore typical individuals, they would not have had to seek psychiatric aid and would not have contributed to the psychiatrists' store of information. Again, I do not wish to belittle the value of this research. It has given us an immensely important insight into the way in which our behaviour patterns can break down. I simply feel that in attempting to discuss the fundamental biological nature of our species as a whole, it is unwise to place too great an emphasis on the earlier anthropological and psychiatric findings.

(I should add that the situation in anthropology and psychiatry is changing rapidly. Many modern research workers in these fields are recognising the limitations of the earlier investigations and are turning more and more to studies of typical, healthy individuals. As one investigator expressed it recently: 'We have put the cart before the horse. We have tackled the abnormals and we are only now beginning, a little late in the day, to concentrate on the normals.)

The approach I propose to use in this book draws its material from three main sources: (i) the information about our past as unearthed by palaeontologists and based on the fossil and other remains of our ancient ancestors; (2) the information available from the animal behaviour studies of the comparative ethologists, based on detailed observations of a wide range of animal species, especially our closest living relatives, the monkeys and apes; and (3) the information that can be assembled by simple, direct observation of the most basic and widely shared behaviour patterns of the successful mainstream specimens from the major contemporary cultures of the naked ape itself.

Because of the size of the task, it will be necessary to oversimplify in some manner. The way I shall do this is largely to ignore the detailed ramifications of technology and verbalisation, and concentrate instead on those aspects of our lives that have obvious counterparts in other species: such activities as feeding, grooming, sleeping, fighting, mating and care of the young. When faced with these fundamental problems, how does the naked ape react? How do his reactions compare with those of other monkeys and apes? In