



Review: Bizarre

Reviewed work(s):

Evolution and Sex. Part One: For Children. by Benjamin Zarr

Evolution and Sex. Part Two: For Adults. by Benjamin Zarr

Evolution of the Plant Kingdom. by Benjamin Zarr

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NEW BIOLOGICAL BOOKS

The aim of this department is to give the reader brief indications of the character, the content, and the value of new books in the various fields of Biology. In addition, there will occasionally appear one longer critical review of a book of special significance. Authors and publishers of biological books should bear in mind that THE QUARTERLY REVIEW OF BIOLOGY can notice in this department only such books as come to the office of the editor. All material for notice in this department should be addressed to The Editors, THE QUARTERLY REVIEW OF BIOLOGY, Division of Biological Sciences, State University of New York, Stony Brook, N. Y. 11790, U.S.A.

BIZARRE

A Review of

EVOLUTION AND SEX. *Part One: For Children. Part Two: For Adults.*

By Benjamin Zarr. Published by the author, P. O. Box 495, Worcester, Mass. \$6.95. 319 p.; ill.; no index. 1970.

EVOLUTION OF THE PLANT KINGDOM.

By Benjamin Zarr. Published by the author, P. O. Box 495, Worcester, Mass. 102 p.; ill.; no index. 1970.

In the January 28, 1972, issue of *The Stanford Daily* Professor Colin Pittendrigh is quoted as saying to his class in Human Biology: "And you had better know the difference between mitosis and meiosis, and you had better know it backwards and forwards, for I assure you that that will be one of the questions on your midterm!" No doubt most teachers of biology are still saying the same thing to innumerable classes in high schools and colleges across the country and around the world. How antiquated and misguided a view this is can be appreciated only after a glimpse of B. Zarr's works, which flow with unbridled zest from his investigations conducted in the best character of the science of the eighteenth century, armchair philosophy.

It is impossible to describe briefly and simply the nature of this new theory of life, sex, and evolution. It cannot be read to be believed, but it must be read to be conceived. The curious reader is promised many hours of incredible enjoyment if he wishes to examine these books. The author discards mitosis entirely, as well as reduction and fertilization in classical cytological senses. He has worked out a better scheme. Sperms and ferms (female sperms) unite, one penetrating the tail of the oth-

er. An embryo is formed, with epidermis from the outer and dermis from the inner in this mutual penetration. The body of the embryo is generated from the inner masses of the sperm and ferm, each giving rise to a series of segments that fuse with those of the other so as to form the right and left sides of the body. There is no dominance or recessiveness in animals, only in plants. The appearance of the child depends on whether the outer skin of the embryo comes from the sperm or the ferm. Sperms have different motal weights, depending on whether they come from the right testicle or the left testicle. Those with a motal weight of 45 come from the right testicle only, those with a motal weight of 40 from either the left one or the right one. All ferms have a motal weight of 40. Hence the sex of the embryo is male if coming from a sperm with weight 45 (from the right testicle) and female if the sperm has a weight of 40 (coming from the right or left testicle).

A reproduction of the figure should make this perfectly clear. However, it is necessary to realize that "every normal sperm is born with 45 motal units." The weakened ones, with only 40 m.u., become so because "at the last moment he burped up 5 motal units of his elemental substance." If, on the other hand, "he should swallow a free-flowing bubble of 5 m.u.'s he will be a stronger sperm," increased to 50. If he then creates (method not explained) a ferm of 45 m.u., a new species, the gorilla, will be produced by their union.

How very ingenious! All else can be based on these assumptions. The author fails to tell us, however, in just what way his theory can be put to

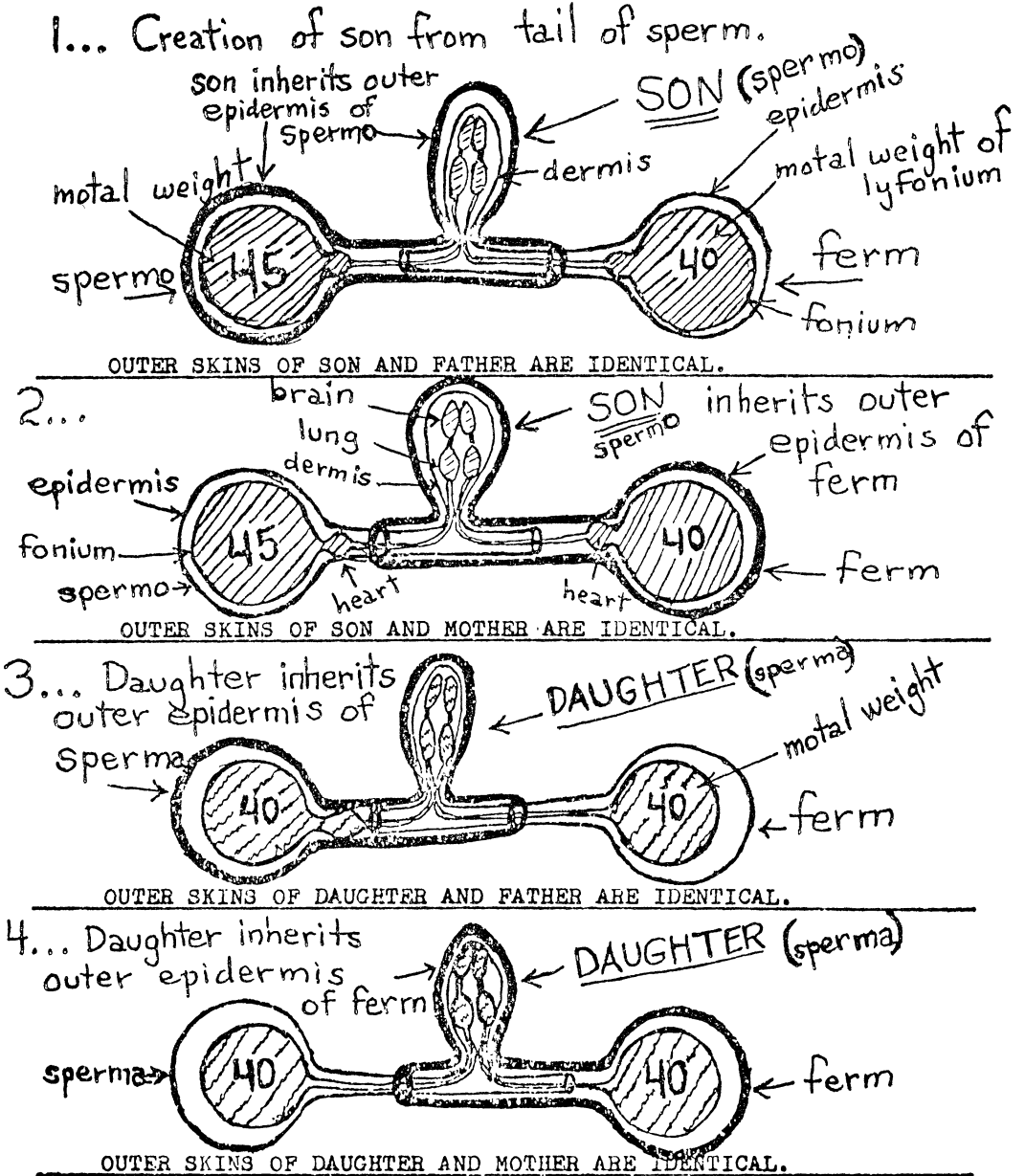


FIG. 1. DETERMINATION OF SEX OF EMBRYO, ACCORDING TO B. ZARR

Reproduced with permission of the author, from *Evolution and Sex*, by Benjamin Zarr, 1970.

the test, although he has found photographs in LIFE magazine that appear to support his views about the embryo's basic bilateral derivation.

In *The Evolution of the Plant Kingdom* the author proceeds to show just how ridiculous the chromosome theory and the Watson-Crick structure

of DNA are in attempting to explain heredity. "Reduction of chromosomes and genes never took place in life because they are phony arithmetic problems." "The Watson-Crick structure was accepted because biology was hungry for any theory which would explain the intricacies of life and evolution.

The Watson-Crick theory is more intricate than the intricacies they try to explain. . . . The Watson-Crick structure shows how DNA molecules are doubled in a special way. . . . Evolution NEVER doubled anything! There are no two cells in the whole human body which are identical. . . . Phooey!"

It seems that these books have not yet been adopted for use in our schools and colleges, although recent successes by the anti-evolutionists in such matters ought to lend the author renewed hope. It seems a happy coincidence that his name is B. Zarr.

Reginald the Office Boy (older but
little wiser)

A SURFEIT OF ESSENTIALS

BY PETER W. FRANK

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A Review of

PATIENT EARTH.

Edited by John Harte and Robert H. Socolow. Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York. \$4.95 (paper). xvi + 364 p.; ill.; index. 1971.

ENVIRONMENT: RESOURCES, POLLUTION AND SOCIETY.

Edited by William W. Murdoch. Sinauer Associates, Stamford, Connecticut. \$5.95 (paper). viii + 440 p.; ill.; index. 1971.

THE ENVIRONMENT, THE ESTABLISHMENT AND THE LAW.

By Harmon Henkin, Martin Merta, and James Staples. Houghton Mifflin, Boston. \$4.50 (paper). 223 p.; ill. 1971.

MAN AND HIS ENVIRONMENT: LAW.

By Earl Einbar Murphy. Harper & Row, New York. \$3.25 (paper); \$6.00 (cloth). viii + 168 p.; index. 1971.

OMEGA. *Murder of the Ecosystem and Suicide of Man.*

Edited by Paul K. Anderson. Wm. C. Brown, Dubuque, Iowa. \$5.95 (paper). xiv + 447 p.; ill.; no index. 1971.

GLOBAL ECOLOGY: *Readings Toward a Rational Strategy for Man.*

Edited by John P. Holdren and Paul R. Ehrlich. Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, New York. \$4.50 (paper). 295 p.; no index. 1971.

UNDERSTANDING ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION.

Edited by Maurice A. Strobbe. The C. V. Mosby Company, St. Louis, Mo. \$5.95 (paper). x + 357 p.; ill.; no index. 1971.

These seven are but a sample of the environmental

books that have crossed my desk in the last few months. For purposes of review, I have excluded some books I consider really poor, run-of-the-mill sets of readings, and textbooks designed for neo-classic conservation courses. Of the works listed above, the last three are collections of published papers, accompanied by only minor editorial comment. By now there are many such sets of readings to choose among, but these may serve to illustrate the genre. They deserve no true review, but it is worth noting their intent and presumed effect. The books edited by Anderson and by Holdren and Ehrlich present varied appeals, centered around problems of population, resources and pollution, for a saner set of environmental policies. For the uninitiated college student or the intelligent layman they provide, in essence, a concise assessment of what all the shouting of the last two years has been about. Thus, compared with the situation in early 1970, we are immensely richer in our ability to provide factual, though slanted, information about broad ecological problems. Meanwhile, discussion of these questions in the news media has increased to a level that makes one wonder how many uninformed, intelligent laymen there can be left, and whether they are more likely to be touched by one of these books than by some issue that thrusts itself on them from the front page of the local paper or from national television. Perhaps within the next two years collected readings such as these will serve as one more example of the "tragedy of the commons."

Global Ecology and *Omega* seek to inform, but they are also, implicitly or overtly, social tracts. Strobbe's book has its share of hortatory prose, but its intent and focus become more specific. Aside from an overview of pollution, the readings are intended to provide more technical information. The book ends with laboratory instructions for certain routine water analyses. Thus, this is a book designed for a course oriented towards pollution control, whereas the others provide background for a sociologically oriented study. Assembled readings are probably less successful as course orientation becomes more specific; gaps show up, and necessary background tends to be omitted. Thus, to me, Strobbe's book does its job less well than would a more conventional textbook, which it can supplement, but not replace.

The two books with the word, law, in their titles share little else. Murphy's is a set of essays or lectures that suggest how an environmentally sensitive lawyer looks at the nexus of scientific, socio-economic and legal questions engendered by technology, and what he perceives to be the role of the law. Murphy concludes, not surprisingly, that law