

BOOK REVIEWS

and theoretical problems that arise in this kind of research, and suitably emphasizes the difficulties that are encountered as well as some of the ways of avoiding them.

This book seems to be a well-balanced review of the subject. It can be recommended to students of psychiatry and should help in making more widespread the understanding of elementary genetical concepts and techniques. It is difficult, however, to agree with Dr. Rosenthal on several details. For example, on page 109, his explanation of the difference in the incidence of schizophrenia between parents and sibs of affected individuals is not persuasive (there are more straightforward explanations like dominance, etc.), and it is probably wrong. Also, on page 143, he declares that the polygenic mode of inheritance seems to be the most parsimonious explanation for the existence of subtypes in schizophrenia, but that the existence of multiple alleles at the locus or of modifiers may turn out to be more parsimonious. A polygenic theory is never parsimonious by definition. Unless it can be proved by more powerful techniques, which are usually not applicable in man, a polygenic theory should be considered only as a last resort. It may, however, have descriptive merits, and allow improvement in the prediction of risks.

Perhaps the major criticism of this book is that it does not introduce or mention the more modern methods of analysis of genetic segregation. The techniques of analysis of segregation employed are all rather simple. This adds to the clarity of exposition but leaves one to wonder if the employment of more powerful techniques on the same material might give improved resolution between the various hypotheses. For such a study, however, original data should be available, fami-

ly by family, and this is not always the case. Moreover, it is not yet entirely clear if the more powerful, modern techniques of segregation analysis now available will be able to resolve cases as complex as those found in behavioral diseases, where variation in diagnostic techniques, in methods of ascertainment, and a very close interaction of genetic and environmental factors (as is expected and indeed found in behavior, normal as well as abnormal), all contribute to make the picture extremely complex.

Dr. Rosenthal emphasizes the role of genetics, and leaves aside, deliberately, environmental explanations. It is clear that a complete view of the problems can only come from a joint consideration of both aspects. For instance, the analysis of discordant identical twins should be able to throw light on environmental differences that may be important in determining abnormal behavior. It is also to be hoped that in the future biochemical analysis will help in understanding more about these diseases, even though so far it has been practically of no help. There is no question that the genetic basis shown through the studies that have thus far been carried out must have a biochemical counterpart, and its demonstration will supply a much more solid basis for study of the diathesis or tendency to some behavioral disorders that is shown by present results.

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**Relations in Public: Microstudies of the Public Order.** By ERVING GOFFMAN. Basic Books, 1971; xviii, 396 pp.; \$7.95.

In his latest book Goffman once again applies his unique approach and

talent to the study of "public life," the realm of human behavior "generated by face-to-face interaction and organized by norms of commingling—a domain containing weddings, family meals, chaired meetings, forced marches, service encounters, queues, crowds, and couples" (p. ix). The label "public life" is an unfortunate choice, as its conventional use so clearly refers either to the political realm or to the realm outside of the private, the personal, the familial. For Goffman does not deal with either of these areas, nor does he deal much with weddings or family meals or forced marches. But never matter. Goffman's general approach is well known. His task now is to elaborate it in regard to particular situations. In this book he has carved out a distinct subject matter, and what he has done with it constitutes a genuinely new contribution—something more than merely the application of his methodology as already advanced in a dozen or so volumes.

The subject matter Goffman focuses on most is the face-to-face encounter in the street. He constantly calls to mind the experience of a simple walk in any large American city. One meets friends or acquaintances, pausing to talk; one passes strangers, and is likely to feel fear. Indeed, crime in the streets—or, more accurately, the conditions under which it does not occur—is a theme that runs throughout the book. While this is not Goffman's sole subject—we are fortunate in the richness and variety of his observations—it could well have served to illustrate all his major points.

First, Goffman introduces the actor, not as a role player, as so much of sociology and psychology has it, but as part of a here-and-now web of interaction. Thus, he is a unit in the traffic patterns of pedestrians on the pavement or of the automobiles in the

street. The individuals keep their distances, give or take the right-of-way work with each other to avoid collisions, at all times guided by a set of rules of commingling and a trust that other actors will abide by their part of the unspoken deal ("I'll go left, you go right"). The significance of this view of the person will deserve further attention later.

The units are in possession of intangible spheres—"territories of the self" which consist of claims to certain areas, times, and possessions. Walking down the street during a New York City rush hour, one expects no one to walk closer than, say, half a foot. These claims are sometimes delineated by markers, like a towel on a beach or a foot in a line. When these territories are violated, it is a sure sign of intimacy—or a likely source of threats.

The individuals, with their spheres surrounding them like a Southern belle's hoop skirt, engage in various rituals for each other's reassurance, for the entrance into or avoidance of a contact, to meet and to part. Exchanges between individuals may be part of a supportive routine or a remedial one. In the former a greeting may be offered, showing that the actors are still "in touch." In the latter, when a violation has been committed—a stranger stepping on your foot, for example—an apology or an account may be offered, indicating that the slight was unintentional.

We should stop here long enough to indicate that while these quick summaries may sound as if Goffman reports and dissects trivial occurrences, the observations are much richer in detail, and hence in subtleties, than can be recaptured here. Second, he laces these observations with numerous asides relevant either to the particular example or to interactive mechanisms involved, or addressed to his fellow so-

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cial scientists. A whole chapter is devoted to "Tie Signs," the inadvertent cues two people will give off that indicate the type and strength of the relationship they are in. Thus, they constitute a whole additional dimension to the rituals already covered, those parts of the ritual that are communication only to an observer.

An important insight into what Goffman is after is provided by his discussion of the alarm. He argues that normal routines may be interrupted by the presence of the unusual. One tactic of dealing with the alarm is to act naturally, which must now be done consciously. The basic point here seems to be that what is done "normally" in a situation is an acquired ability. At some earlier time it was problematic and it becomes problematic again when it has to be done with thought. This is also a justification, a good one we think, for the kind of sociology Goffman is doing: he is not simply saying things that everybody *knows* but is saying things that everybody *does* without easily being able to make them explicit.

The book closes with a discussion of the sources and pervasiveness of alarm. First, Goffman argues that the steps from calm to alarm may be quite quick. Second, "It is possible, then, to list some of the sources of social control in public places, but it is hard to have confidence that, even taken together, these are relevantly effective ones. Whatever its causes, however, the surface character of public order can be identified" (p. 331). But, he continues, "we are coming more and more to see . . . the vulnerability of public life" (p. 331). Goffman offers the unconventional suggestion that one solution to the problem of alarm is the redefinition of risk in the streets as routine. However, there is still a problem in knowing just what risks Goffman is referring to. He

tends to draw examples from espionage and dramatic crime, while he makes his analytic statements about territorial offenses and verbal slights. If one must characterize his position in terms of the present ideological debate, he is closer to the "you can avoid trouble if you know how to travel in the city" school than to the arrest-those-muggers one.

But it does not do Goffman justice to place him neatly in a traditional cubby hole; his way of looking at things is different. When most sociologists are asked about crime they respond in terms of demography, police methods, statistics; Goffman answers in terms of ritual. But he does not state that the study of ritual should replace that of early childhood experience, deviant culture, and social structure. He cites the symbolic interactionists and the ethnomethodologists but does not suggest that sociology or psychology should become Symbolic Interaction or Ethnomethodology.

When Goffman differs with other approaches, it is to call them incomplete rather than wrong. And this is, as we see it, the right territory for this approach to claim. Does it explain crime, criminals, or deviant-producing societies? Certainly not. Does it account for public life? Not at all. But it does deeply enrich our view of all of these, calling attention again and again, in each chapter and section of the book (including the long but valuable appendix), to whole facets which would otherwise have been missed. (The reason we do not say "on each page" is because Goffman shows a Parsonian tendency to spend an inordinate amount of words on defining terms and building classifications before he clears his thoughts and speaks about what he sees. Many people do that, but Goffman used to be freer of this practice than he is in his most recent volume.)

The essence of what Goffman adds to the understanding of interpersonal life is a glimpse of it in process. He has little interest in root causes, macro structures, and cultures impinging on the situation, let alone in economics or geography. He treats as his unit the particular occurrence or pattern of interaction and gets to work on "digging" it. We are all richer as a result.

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**Body Experience in Fantasy and Behavior.** By SEYMOUR FISHER. Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1970; xii, 690 pp.; \$12.50.

In a concluding section of *Body Experience in Fantasy and Behavior*, the author remarks, "It is obvious that the act of beholding one's own body is exceedingly multi-faceted" (p. 567). With whatever strength one held such a view before, it can scarcely fail to be strongly impressed anew after encountering this book.

There is detailed treatment of the research of Fisher and his colleagues on body boundary and awareness phenomena. But there is also, to the extent of a book-within-a-book, a review of the entire field of body experience research and theory. Extending roughly through 1968, with a smattering of 1969 references, Fisher runs the gamut of body-experience phenomena, both normal and pathological. The book is admirably organized—a virtual necessity for the extent and variety of materials which Fisher considers. The text is divided into clear sections, and numerous introduction, comment, and

overview sections are interspersed throughout.

One hesitates, when confronted with a review of this magnitude, to suggest possible lacunae in the coverage. It is nevertheless surprising in the context of the author's discussion of the relations between body image, various forms of disablement, and interpersonal interaction, that there is no mention of such work as Goffman's *Stigma* and Kleck's (1966, 1968) experimental investigations of the effects of physical stigma on interaction. Similarly, Fisher's extensive treatment of the body boundary concepts omits the literature on the closely related concepts of personal space (e.g., Sommer) and territoriality. While he emphasizes at points the complex relationships between interaction with others and the development of body experience, Fisher seems most at home strictly within the individual's skin.

Fisher's aim is nothing less than constructive integration of the entire area of body experience research and theory. And it is in his integrating and speculating mode that Fisher is at his most intriguing. As he sees it, the underlying issue for this research is how body experience can, in the words of the Preface, "take on structure and have long-term directive effects" (p. vii), just as do attitudes and other cognitive sets. Referring to Schachtel and to Piaget and Inhelder, Fisher suggests that the power of the peripheral body signals derives in part from infancy and early childhood, prior to the extensive acquisition of cognitive sets, when experiences were more deeply evaluated on the basis of direct body reactions and sensations.

As introjected attitudes and values begin to overlay this direct experience they are "coded in terms of differential awareness of specific body parts" (p. 577). The selection of body parts