

BOOK REVIEW

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Politics and People in Ethology: Personal Reflections on the Study of Animal Behavior, by Peter H. Klopfer, Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 1999.

Peter Klopfer, self-defined ethologist and behavioral ecologist, provides us with a set of personal reminiscences spanning his long career in the study of animal behavior. Because of his belief that ethology "has been influenced as much...by the personalities and politics of its purveyors as by their data" (p. 11), he devotes much of the book to examining the personalities and/or politics of the teachers and researchers he has known. In so doing, he provides us with amusing anecdotes, historical accounts of various departments of psychology and fields of research, and his assessment of some controversial issues. A number of photographs enhance the text.

Because the book is, in many ways, an autobiography, we learn much about Klopfer's own personality and politics, as well. In the first chapter, "Personal Beginnings," he tells us how he came to adopt the Quaker faith, whose doctrines of pacifism and social activism are evident in the way in which he has lived his life. In the early 1950s, as a conscientious objector during the Korean War, he tore up his draft card. Fortunately, his a three-year prison sentence was reduced to probation, but he remained a convicted felon, which had implications later in his career. He was a student at UCLA at the time, and it was here that he met Martha Smith, who would later become his wife and partner, especially in his work with the social behavior of goats.

Klopfer devotes a chapter to the years he spent at Yale, where lasting friendships developed with G. Evelyn Hutchinson, who supervised his dissertation, and fellow graduate student Robert MacArthur. On receiving their doctorates both students took up post-

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docs in Britain, MacArthur at Oxford and Klopfer at Maddingley Field Station for Animal Behaviour at Cambridge. In the political climate of mid-1950s Britain, Klopfer soon was faced with the fact that the research of some scientists was "consciously driven by political ideologies" (p. 56). Was this the way to go? Klopfer decided that it was not, and took as his model Bill Thorpe, an eminent researcher and Director of the Field Station. Thorpe displayed "a politically neutral science complemented by a strong and faithful commitment to a particular social and political platform" (p. 56). Like Klopfer, Thorpe was a devote Quaker, and it was the values of this faith that both men exemplified. Indeed, over the years, the scientists with whom Klopfer developed the strongest rapport were usually Quakers.

With respect to the issue of the political use of one's research findings, Klopfer presents a very interesting examination of the controversy surrounding Konrad Lorenz's role in the Nazi policy of ethnic cleansing. He includes lengthy quotations from a 1940 paper by Lorenz that had not previously been published in English. Indeed, Klopfer suggests that Lorenz's hydraulic model of motivation, with its assumption that only a single, specific stimulus can release the motivated response, "may have been derived as much from this ideology as it was from his studies of animals" (p. 60). The link, of course, is the view that in order to maintain this species-specific behavior, hybridization should not occur. It was Lorenz's ebullient personality, Klopfer believes, that allowed colleagues to ignore his checkered past, as it seems Klopfer himself was willing to do.

In 1958, Klopfer accepted an appointment in the Department of Zoology at Duke University where he remains to this day. Like at least some other Duke faculty, he was attracted to the university by the sunny weather in North Carolina. The chapter on Duke describes his social activism, including his role in sit-ins and other activities of the anti-segregation movement, and in establishing the Carolina Friends School. At Duke, Klopfer soon developed ties with colleagues in the Psychology Department who were also studying animal behavior. Of interest to all primatologists is the account of the origins and early years of the Duke Primate Center. Associated with this is the sad story of the Center's co-founder, anthropologist John Buettner-Janusch, whose life ended in tragedy and despair.

A chapter is devoted to the research carried out, and the colleagues he worked with, on numerous field trips that took him from the Caribbean and Central America to Aldabra, an isolated atoll in the Indian Ocean. From the time he was at Yale, Klopfer and his wife raised goats, and studied their behavior. The Aldabra research involved the study of goats indigenous to the island. Included as an Appendix is

a Journal that he and Martha kept during their six-week field trip. A trip to Madagascar was made to confirm, in the field, results on maternal behavior obtained from captive lemurs at the Primate Station. This confirmation of findings with free-ranging animals has been a consistent theme of Klopfer's research.

In the chapter entitled "Later Years," Klopfer returns to the issue of science and values, as he presents his perspective on the stormy political debates that arose in response to the publication of E. O. Wilson's *Sociobiology*. He also deals with the history of the field of behavioral ecology with which he feels closely allied. And he looks back, longingly it seems to me, to the early days of ethology, when international meetings of the Ethological Conference were small, and young scientists were able to interact on a personal level with the luminaries of the discipline. The book concludes with Klopfer's reflections on his teaching, the social construction of ethology and the future of the field.

My only concern stems from the nature of the book: a set of reminiscences. As Klopfer himself points out, memory, one's own or that of one's colleagues, can be fallible. The book is filled with historical information, but it may be of little use to historians of science. I'm basing this conclusion on one example about which I have some knowledge of the history. This is the discussion of the relationship of Klopfer's friend, Donald Adams, with parapsychologist J. B. Rhine, both at one time member of the Duke Psychology Department. Basing his discussion on memory for what he claims Adams told him many years ago, Klopfer makes a number of inaccurate statements. For example, William McDougall became the Chair of the Duke Psychology Department in the summer of 1927, the same year that Rhine came to Duke, not in the early 1930s as indicated in the text. Rhine received a permanent appointment in Psychology in 1931, the same year that Adams was appointed. Although somewhat negative, Adams initially did not display the animosity to Rhine and his work that he would later. He was even serving as a test subject for Rhine as late as 1936. The thing is that, with less than an hour's research, Klopfer could easily have checked out the details and provided an accurate account -- the information is all there in a book by one of his colleagues in the Duke History Department (Mauskopf & McVaugh, 1980). Given this example, I'd be hesitant to cite historical facts presented in this work without first checking them out in other sources.

All this aside, Klopfer has written a charming book that all animal behaviorists should find both entertaining and thought-provoking. Klopfer's personality shines through the pages; he loves his work and his subjects, and his fellow human beings. He has managed to be both

a productive scientist and a concerned social activist, and to keep his science value-free.

REFERENCE

- Mauskopf, S. H. & McVaugh, M. R. (1980). *The Elusive Science: Origins of Experimental Psychological Research*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.