

observes, J. M. W. Turner's stunning *Rain, Steam, and Speed* (1845) both celebrates the dynamism of the railroad and suggests its apocalyptic power.

Commerce and culture changed too. Fresh fish and beef arrived overnight in London from Scotland, and copies of Darwin's newly published *Origin of Species* sold like hotcakes at Waterloo Station. Meanwhile, cheap tickets were bringing long-distance travel to the masses for the first time. At the Great Exhibition of 1851 in the Crystal Palace, excursion trains attracted throngs of rural families. The companies' fare structure, Freeman suggests, helped integrate the working class into British society, especially as third-class amenities improved. But railroads also helped fragment social space. Even as they were creating the original middle-class suburbs around London, their new construction spawned domino-like waves of social displacement.

No 20th-century innovation changed everyday life as radically and permanently as railroading did in the 19th. Neither aviation nor atomic energy could compare. Only now is the Internet, for better or worse, giving us a sense of how our ancestors must have experienced the early trains, including the frenzy of financial speculation. Freeman has written a clear, engaging tribute to material and aesthetic accomplishments that continue to serve millions.

—Edward Tenner

WILD MINDS:

What Animals Really Think.

By Marc D. Hauser. Holt. 336 pp. \$25

Animal cognition is a rich and vital topic, and Hauser, a professor of psychology and neu-

rosience at Harvard University, aims to popularize it. Unfortunately, he has written a book that will appeal mainly to his fellow scientists.

He opens in the contentious style of a scientific paper, criticizing previous works (including my own) that, in his view, have too quickly drawn analogies between human thought and animal thought. Then he sets forth his own theories. Animals, in his view, lack self-awareness. They communicate by rote, and cannot combine sounds to form novel and meaningful expressions. They lack emotional self-awareness. They are incapable of empathy. They cannot be considered moral agents.

In support of his theories, Hauser trots out a virtual menagerie—vervet monkeys, honeybees, Clark's nutcrackers, desert ants—and describes field observations and laboratory experiments intended to demonstrate aspects of their cognition. It takes a skilled and experienced author to make behavioral studies come alive for the nonscientist, who tends to care less about experiments and theories than about animals. Hauser doesn't succeed.

But it can be done. In *The Nature of Horses* (1997), Stephen Budianski covered much of the same ground by concentrating on one species. He showed how the horse evolved from a solitary, forest-dwelling browser into the socialized athlete of the glacial steppes, for whom the seemingly simple act of running requires data processing powers almost beyond our imagination. We find ourselves in awe of horses and their remarkable abilities. Like Hauser, Budianski may not share all of my views on animal cognition, but he shows how an author can bring important scientific questions to a wider audience.

—Elizabeth Marshall Thomas

Contemporary Affairs

THE BABY BOON:

How Family-Friendly America Cheats the Childless.

By Elinor Burkett. Free Press. 256 pp. \$25

America has always cast a cold eye on the childless. Let it be known that the seen, heard, nasty, brutish, and short are missing from your

life and you will be pitied, censured, called "abnormal," and referred to a wonderful doctor who will find out what's wrong with you.

This prejudice is flourishing in today's "family-friendly" workplaces. Childless employees are being turned into a servant class for an aristocracy of parents who invoke the privilege of flextime to come in late, leave early, and beg



off Saturday work in the arrogant belief that their unblessed coworkers are happy to fill in for them.

The childless also bear the brunt of the tax burden, while parents get a \$500 tax credit per child, a \$1,500 tax credit for college tuition, a child-care tax credit, and extended unemployment insurance to stay home with a newborn. Moreover, companies skimp on benefits to the childless while lavishing on parents such perks as 12 weeks of unpaid maternity/paternity leave, adoption and foster care leave, on-site day care, breast-feeding rooms, paid absences for school plays and PTA conferences, and even “bonding time.”

In short, writes Burkett, the childless subsidize the fecund in “the most massive redistribution of wealth since the War on Poverty.” Burkett, a history professor turned journalist, approaches her subject with the shrinking timidity of Carry Nation. She calls family “the F-word” and thinks family-friendly policies are a “welfare program for baby boomers” and “affirmative action based on reproductive choice.” She also considers them profoundly reactionary. Rewarding parents at the expense of nonparents, she maintains, is no different from the old practice of paying men more than women because they had families to support.

“Parents,” of course, is a euphemism for frazzled working mothers. With a fine impartiality, Burkett blames the family policy rip-off on conservatives obsessed with motherhood and liberals obsessed with women’s rights. They have met their common enemy, and it is the childless. Feminists, who used to rail against the family as a patriarchal institution, must now support profamily legislation or else admit they were wrong when they told women they could have it all. “Feminism has become the ladies’ auxiliary of the parents’ rights movement,”

Burkett writes acidly, “and the words woman and mother have become synonymous once again.”

This no-holds-barred book will upset many, but it marshals a wickedly funny compendium of evidence of America’s child fixation: the 1988 presidential election, when George Bush and Michael Dukakis both campaigned in daycare centers; the peanut butter-free zones established in daycare centers when parents panicked over the allergy scare; the trial lawyer who found a right to breast-feed in the Constitution; and the \$375 breast pump that plugs into a car’s cigarette lighter, allowing lactating careerists to milk themselves while driving to work.

Burkett’s most controversial point is her suspicion that the real impetus behind the baby boon is the demographic forecast that minorities will be in the majority in the near future. Showering tax breaks and benefits on affluent whites rewards fertility and encourages “birth by bribery,” a ploy not unlike the Nazi practice of awarding the Mutterkreuz to Aryan super-moms.

—Florence King

THE NATURE OF ECONOMIES.

By Jane Jacobs. Random House. 190 pp. \$21.95

Jacobs burst on the scene in 1961 with *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, a book that helped prevent the destruction of Manhattan’s SoHo manufacturing district by highway builders. Before moving to Canada in 1969, she was deeply engaged in stopping Westway, another monster highway project in New York. She arrived in Toronto only to find the Spadina Expressway bearing down on her home. She stopped that, too.

Death and Life and its successors, *The Economy of Cities* (1969) and *Cities and the Wealth of Nations* (1984), were works of economics by a journalist. The community of technical economists, accustomed to writing in highly mathematical language, ignored her (with the honorable exception of Robert Lucas at the University of Chicago). So, giving up on them, Jacobs switched to a different form.

Systems of Survival (1992) and, now, *The Nature of Economies* are Platonic dialogues among a handful of imagined citizens who inhabit a civilized New York quite like the city