

Patagonia in 1832 and came away four years later with an idea, "for the mere sight of the [Tierra del] Fuegians helped trigger off the theory that Man had evolved from an ape-like species." In 97 observant sketches, Chatwin depicts daily life—then and now—at the "uttermost part of the earth."

SOCIOBIOLOGY: The Abridged Edition. By Edward O. Wilson. Harvard, 1980. 366 pp. \$9.95 (cloth, \$18.50)

The debate over the biological roots of animal and human social behavior heated up in 1975 with the publication of *Sociobiology* by Harvard biologist Wilson. This abridged version for the layman eliminates the technical expositions and data summaries but retains all the basic propositions. Specific (but as yet undiscovered) genes, Wilson contends, predispose humans variously toward altruism, guilt, even homosexuality. Natural selection not only determines the color of our eyes but also, to an extent, the way we care for our children, and explains why we will sometimes give up our own lives so that others might live. The old maxim that "the chicken is only an egg's way of making another egg has been mod-

ernized: the organism is only DNAs way of making more DNA," Wilson declares. He systematically traces the social behavior of ants and bees, birds, dolphins, elephants, bears, lions, and finally man. Wilson's theories have drawn sharp criticism, notably from philosophers and political scientists who oppose any reduction of the social sciences and humanities to branches of biology. Sociobiology, they argue, ignores, or worse yet, disparages the age-old concept of free will.

MY LIFE. By George Sand. Harper reprint, 1980. 246 pp. \$3.95

George Sand, the Frenchwoman who shocked her peers by renouncing her comfortable marriage and country estate for the writer's garret, penned her autobiography to set the record straight—at a time (1854–55) when much of her career lay still before her. Sand was born Aurore Dupin in 1804, "the last year of the Republic and the first of the Empire." As a child, she witnessed the turmoil wrought by the French Revolution from her aristocratic grandmother's country home and, later, from a convent school in Paris. At 18, she married; but feeling that "my small fortune, my freedom to do nothing, my supposed right to command a certain number of human beings . . . went against my tastes, my logic, my talents," she fled. Back in Paris, at age 26, she wore men's clothes, joined the literary avant-garde, and began work on the first of some 80 Romantic novels (among them, *Lélia*, *The Haunted Pool*, *The Master Bell-Ringers*) until her death in 1876. In clean, energetic prose, Sand describes the artists' enclave of Paris—the self-satisfaction and childishness of her friend Balzac, the affectations of Stendhal, the genius and torment of her lover, Frédéric Chopin. Sand chose not to be the central figure of her autobiography, weaving instead a rich tapestry of people and events in post-Revolutionary France.



By Sarah Landrs. From *Sociobiology*. Used by permission of Harvard University Press.