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most anthropologists and social scientists, allows genes only a very general influence in the shaping of collective behavior. The implications of the debate are far-reaching. For example, if aggression, which has marked much of human history, is, as anthropologists maintain, culturally based, then it is possible, through conscious innovation, to modify our behavior. But if aggression is part of our genetic heritage, as Wilson and Lumsden suggest, then prospects for change, at least over the short term, are much more limited.

**THE PHYSICISTS**  
by C. P. Snow  
Little, Brown, 1981  
192 pp. \$15.95

Straddling three worlds, Charles Percy Snow (1905–80), physicist, novelist, statesman, sought in his own life, as in this engaging history, to make connections among them. Beginning with Cambridge physicist J. J. Thompson's 1897 discovery of subatomic particles, Snow proceeds through the "golden age" of physics, the 1920s, during which a truly European community (with research hubs in Göttingen, Copenhagen, Rome, and Cambridge) plumbed the secrets of the atom. Instead of focusing on the biggest name, Einstein, Snow evokes, in anecdotal style, the multitude of individuals who toiled and the variety of talents they brought to bear on this scientific endeavor. Discovering the atom's nucleus in 1911, Ernest Rutherford, the great experimental physicist, provided valuable data for Niels Bohr's pioneering model of the atom. The work of the "marvelous decade" was crowned, in 1928, by Paul Dirac's synthesis of various theories of atomic structure with Einstein's theory of relativity. The community was splintered in the 1930s, when Nazi and Fascist anti-Semitism forced many physicists to flee to the United States. Snow defends the Manhattan Project and its refugee scientists, who, knowing the Germans were fully capable of engineering an atomic bomb, raced to beat them to it. No believer in the neutrality of science, Snow bids the modern physicist to speak out on the implications of his work and to avoid "letting the conscience rust."