

misconceptions about the factors determining racial and gender roles and the causes of environmental problems, not to reconstruct biology itself. Vanderveer's book might thus serve as a text for a college course in biological perspectives on race and gender or on the causes of Third World poverty.

References

- Angier, N. (1997, March 14). Sexual identity not pliable after all, report says. *The New York Times*, pp. A1, A18.
- Ehrlich, P. R. & Ehrlich, A. H. (1990). *The Population Explosion*. New York: Simon and Schuster. 320 pp.

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MOLECULAR BIOLOGY

Our Molecular Nature: The Body's Motors, Machines and Messages. By David S. Goodsell. 1996. Springer-Verlag New York, Inc. (175 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10010). 183 pp. Cloth \$25.

 In *Our Molecular Nature*, David S. Goodsell, a molecular biologist at the Scripps Research Institute, writes for a secondary or college level audience interested in the molecules of life. He does not presume prior knowledge on the part of the reader and writes clearly to explain how molecular structure and function contribute to life. While not encyclopedic, this is the kind of book that secondary and college instructors and their students can use as a reference or for rapid acquisition of background information. The text provides interesting information in usable amounts. The book is organized logically and chapters build on preceding ones.

The first chapter provides not only background information but also a sense of scale for the rest of this well-organized book. It begins with an explanation of cells and molecules, then follows with background information on cellular structures and the nomenclature of many of the molecules found in our cells. The second chapter explains how several enzymes, from chymotrypsin to alcohol dehydrogenase, function. Goodsell also includes cellular information from DNA to molecular chaperones in this chapter. The next chapter describes cellular energy production and recounts the events associated with

cellular respiration and the degradation of several different classes of macromolecules. The chapter titled "Form and Function" explains structural elements, connective tissue, cellular and organismal motility. "Dangers and Defenses" explores the structure and function of a variety of venom and toxin molecules as well as several molecules of defense from immunoglobulins to fibrin. Finally, Goodsell discusses neurotransmitters, hormones and sensation in the penultimate chapter. He concludes with a very short epilogue about molecules and medicine, an area of particular interest for him. A three-page glossary provides information for those with little molecular background. Goodsell also references World Wide Web coordinates from the Brookhaven Protein Data Bank, which many readers may find useful.

While neither encyclopedic nor extremely detailed, this is a book teachers and students will deem user friendly. The organization of *Our Molecular Nature* is logical and the writing is clear. The description of each molecule is limited to two or three paragraphs, each of which delivers pertinent information without overwhelming the reader. Structures mentioned in one chapter and described elsewhere are cross referenced. One or two cross references are inaccurate, artifacts of the editing process. I was impressed with the readability of this book and found myself moving rapidly from chapter to chapter, referencing molecules described in earlier chapters.

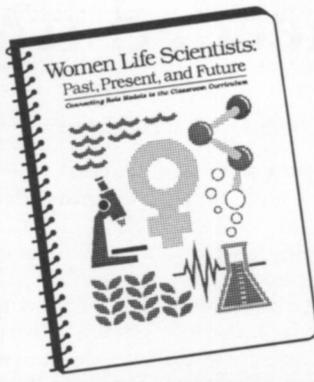
While not detailed enough to provide support for students in advanced college courses, *Our Molecular Nature* is good for more advanced high school courses and introductory college level courses. It is a handy classroom or library reference for high school teachers and instructors of introductory level college courses. I certainly plan to use my copy this way.

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BAT BIOLOGY, MAMMALS, ECOLOGY, CONSERVATION

Bats in Question—The Smithsonian Answer Book. By Don E. Wilson. 1997. Smithsonian Institution Press (470 L'enfant Plaza, Ste. 7100, Washington, DC 20560). 168 pp. Paperback (photos) \$24.95.

 One of my favorite activities during the short Montana summers is to hike in the pine forested hills near my home during the early evening. If lucky, I can spot bats flying overhead with their characteristic short dives, quick turns, and aerial acrobatics that are easily recognizable. I have always wondered where they went to avoid the harsh northern winters and what particular species they might be. *Bats in Question—The Smithsonian Answer Book* did a fantastic job of answering many of the questions I have had about these fascinating crea-



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