

## BOOK REVIEWS

**Big Foot-Prints: A Scientific Inquiry into the Reality of Sasquatch** by Grover S. Krantz. Boulder (CO): Johnson Books, 1992, 300 pp. \$14.95 (paper), (available from The Sourcebook Project, P. O. Box 107, Glen Arm, MD 21057).

This is an admirable book. In anomalistics, it is extraordinarily difficult to be both authoritative and objective, because those who are authorities generally became so through being True Believers or True Disbelievers. Grover Krantz is thoroughly convinced that Bigfoot is real, but he aims to explicate the evidence and his reasoning, not to cram his conclusions down the reader's throat; and he is fully conscious of what non-believers are wont to think. As he shrugs aside a possible explanation for Australian Bigfoot: "At present, I see no need to try to explain a phenomenon that is not known to exist," he also sees himself as others see him: "But then, that's the same attitude most of my colleagues take toward the sasquatch" (p. 216). And in the brief concluding Chapter 12, Krantz gives a plausible and disinterested scenario for what the accredited discovery of Bigfoot would entail; after a while, "Life will go on, almost as if nothing had happened" (p. 273).

But in the meantime the quest is exciting and fascinating to many people, and this book can be read with profit and pleasure by believers and non-believers alike. Readers not only learn about the evidence regarding Bigfoot but benefit too from Krantz's thorough understanding of the intellectual and social corollaries of taking an interest in anomalous claims, often expressed with a dry sense of humor.

The Introduction (Chapter 1) and Chapters 8 through 12 make enjoyable, fascinating reading for any anomalist. Chapters 2 through 7 detail such evidence as footprints, film, the fossil record, sometimes more exhaustively than a general reader might wish. If so, there's nothing to prevent one from scanning and skipping in this part of the book.

Chapter 1 reviews the evidence and the main earlier works on the subject. In a nutshell (pp. 3-5) one learns what it takes for a new species, in particular this one, to be accredited within science. Also succinctly, Krantz points out what needs explaining if Bigfoot does *not* exist, and answers the common question, "Why no bones?" (have yet been found). He reviews the typical stages through which animals proceed from being known locally by the natives to becoming an accredited topic of research.

Why, asks Krantz, are most people able to say "I don't know" about some matters about which they are ill informed — thermodynamics, say — whereas they don't hesitate to express strong opinions about other matters — the exist-

tence of Bigfoot, say — about which they are at least equally ill-informed? Here's a question well worth pondering. For the present case, Krantz makes the plausible suggestion that it's because the possible existence of Bigfoot is closely allied to matters that we really care about, namely whether we humans are unique or whether we are full members of the animal kingdom.

Chapters 2 through 7 are a scrupulously detailed discussion of the evidence, quite authoritative because Krantz has done much if not most of this work himself. Here one occasionally sees how thoroughgoing belief led him to entertain possibilities that seem downright implausible to others: for instance (p. 175), that lumber companies are actively impeding the search because if Bigfoot is found, and declared endangered, the lumber business will be affected even more than by spotted owls. Disbelievers might also fault Krantz's reasons for rejecting hoaxing as an explanation for the footprints, among them that the prints have two characteristics known only to him and which he has never revealed to anyone nor written down anywhere (pp. 34-5). But one also sees how tightly Krantz can apply logic, for example (p. 158) in concluding that Bigfoot is nocturnal and how that provides an explanation for the possible co-existence of bears and Bigfoot even though both would seem to occupy the same ecological niche. And Krantz's defense is delightfully matter-of-fact, to the charge that he has created a scientific name in absence of a type specimen: "Gigantopithecus blacki was named by Ralph von Koenigswald more than fifty years ago; I simply [sic!] attributed some footprints to that species" (p. 193).

This meaty book led me to think, again, about the differences between anomalistics and (mainstream) science. In both, one applies logic to evidence: "if this", "then" there are the following consequences; and then one tries to do something with those consequences. Where some anomalists often fall short, and leave themselves unguarded against the epithets "crank" and "pseudo-scientist," is in the application of logic to infer consequences; and perhaps even more in not then developing tests of those consequences, or being unwilling to accept the results of such tests; as someone aptly put it, scientists try to get answers whereas many anomalists are mystery-mongers. Grover Krantz, by contrast, exemplifies the scientific anomalist through the tightness of his logic and by his desire to find ways of testing the conclusions that he arrives at. Thus he took great pains in searching for a possible grain of truth behind the story of the capture of a young sasquatch in 1884 (pp. 202 ff.), using impeccable logic to guide his search.

Here debunkers will sneer, of course, that anyone would be so gullible as not to dismiss such a story out-of-hand. But here is the inescapable difference between (mainstream) science and anomalistics. Anomalists are willing to consider evidence that science is not: the latter finds the data easier to dismiss than to contemplate — because the data are apparently irreproducible, may consist of human testimony instead of objective facts, and have no apparent explanation under the ruling paradigms. That's why lotteries get won by gullible people who don't know anything about statistics, and why great dis-

coveries in science are made by single-minded enthusiasts, not by debunkers. As Bernard Shaw observed, all progress depends on the unreasonable man.

Chapter 8 reviews the claims of Sasquatch-like creatures in other parts of the world. Krantz points out that only man and his accompanying domesticated animals are so widely distributed as these reports: "when it is suggested that a wild primate is found native to all continents, including Australia, then credibility drops sharply.... Beyond a certain point, ... the more widespread a cryptozoological species is reported to be, the less likely it is that the creature exists at all" (p. 197).

Chapter 9 tells of the hunters of Bigfoot and their motives. Krantz distinguishes novices, "tranquilizers," "recorders," and "'professionals,'" giving vignettes in which anyone who knows anomalists will recognize characteristic types. In Chapter 10, the attitude of science to this (and similar) matters is examined, and Krantz gives some autobiographical details of how he has been able to survive in academe while taking his quest so seriously.

Chapter 11, "Prospects" for settling the matter, is again worthwhile non-technical reading for everyone, with ingenuity, logic, and objectivity deployed toward what most people would judge to be a very unlikely prospect.

I recommend this book unreservedly to those interested in anomalies in general or Bigfoot in particular. Anyone is likely to disagree with Krantz at a few points, but no one will be disappointed to have read the book.

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**Striking the Mother Lode in Science: The Importance of Age, Place, and Time** by Paula E. Stephan & Sharon G. Levin. New York: Oxford University Press, 1992. 194 + xiii pp. \$29.95. ISBN 0-19-506405-4.

The explicit focus of this book, defined in its sub-title, may seem quite specialized but the book is worth reading by anyone interested in the nature of contemporary scientific activity. In particular, the last chapter offers sensible suggestions for a wide range of public policies about schools and universities. Moreover, the presentation is commendably readable and free of jargon.

The authors are economists, and some of their stand-points are a refreshing change from those usually taken by sociologists or philosophers. Thus one reason why a professor's productivity might decrease with age, they point out, is that the cumulative rewards to be expected from a given effort are less, the older one is. On occasion, though, the economist's viewpoint is more troubling