

est à la fois synthèse des connaissances acquises et ouverture sur les recherches futures". C'est le plus bel éloge que pouvait souhaiter son auteur.

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Understanding Culture. John J. HONIGMANN. New York, Harper & Row, Publishers, 1963. viii-468 pp., ill. \$6.75.

Though this book has certain similarities to Honigmann's earlier compendium *The World of Man* (1959), it is not just a condensation. *Understanding Culture* is a completely reorganized and rewritten introduction to cultural anthropology. It is being advertised as a text and I believe it should be considered primarily with this in mind.

What is there to understanding culture? Several theories such as evolutionism, Freudian psychology and the like are reviewed. While the discussion of these is a bit sketchy in places, Honigmann leaves no doubt that for him at least the most useful approach is functionalism which he says "dominates contemporary anthropology," p. 13. For Honigmann culture is instrumental — it is man's way of coping. Understanding of it comes about through observing how societies meet their problems. Honigmann begins by introducing the student to the significance of the food quest. There follow detailed descriptions of the subsistence patterns of three social systems: the Kaska, the Hopi and the Pathans of Swat. Cross-cultural data representing these three societies appear in virtually all of the 15 chapters devoted to exploring the range of culture from witchcraft to community studies. Their inclusion strengthens Honigmann's presentation in several ways. For one thing these peoples exemplify quite different levels of cultural complexity. For another they provide a very meaningful comparative continuity so often absent in introductory texts.

The book is nicely done. Honigmann is a provocative writer. His formulation is clear, and the style easy yet vigorous. The order of the chapters is logical, although the titles of some may bother the more traditionally-minded. Each chapter also contains a well-selected bibliography. Charts, diagrams and photographs are numerous and well-labelled. A number of quotations extracted from original sources have also been included. These and other cross-cultural examples taken from the world's ethnographic literature add immeasurably to the clarity of the text.

As to criticisms, undoubtedly some will wish to challenge Honigmann's particular brand of functionalism. Certainly his time dimension is not always as precise as it might be, particularly in chapters 16 and 17 which touch upon the processes of social change. Again, one might question whether

Honigmann is describing society or culture or, indeed, if he feels they are essentially separable concepts. My real misgivings about the book concern the last two chapters, 18 and 19. These outline biological evolution and prehistory — New and Old World. The former is somewhat faulty in its conception and also not unexpectedly incomplete; the latter is so compressed that it would be useless to begin citing its inadequacies. These two chapters seem almost totally unrelated to the remainder of the book. It would be my suggestion, therefore, that they be eliminated in future editions. Furthermore, I doubt that anyone nowadays would attempt to offer either physical anthropology or archaeology as part of an introductory course on the basis of these chapters alone.

Despite these reservations, I am enthusiastic about this text. I have used it in a large first-year course with considerable success. Its organization and flexibility are particularly appealing. Also the class responses have been very positive. *Understanding Culture* seems to be a text that students can understand and find meaningful. Can there be a better recommendation than this?

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