



CULTURAL
ANTHROPOLOGY



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CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

The Science of Custom

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WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY THE AUTHOR



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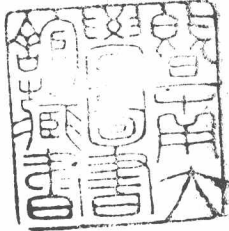
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Foreword

CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY presents the social science and humanities facets of anthropology, in contrast to its biological facet, physical anthropology. The cultural anthropologist looks at human behavior comparatively. He examines the many different systems of custom throughout the world; seeks to explain their origin and development; weighs their likenesses and contrasts. He probes the values, premises, and goals which make a given "culture" a rounded way of life, and also the relation between the culture of the group and the personality of the individual. He analyzes the processes by which customs persist or change.

As such, cultural anthropology is challenging the interest of an increasing number of persons outside the professional ranks of the science. These include workers in other scientific and humanistic disciplines, together with educators, government administrators, doctors, lawyers, social service workers, military research specialists, and others with "applied" concerns. Anthropology is a subject, too, in which laymen not only have shown interest as being a fascinating avocation, but also have made substantial technical contributions. In college settings, enrollments in general cultural anthropology courses are rising steadily.

Most general works in anthropology tend to be addressed to the incipient doctoral candidate, if not to professional colleagues. Often they focus upon some particular theory rather than giving a rounded picture of the development of thought within the science as a whole. The steady purpose of this work is to give to the wider nonspecialist audiences, including the undergraduate student, an understanding of the development and content of cultural anthropology, though never "talking down" or shirking essential technicalities. The problems and perspectives opened out will, it is hoped, be both intellectually satisfying and of some practical significance in regard to issues of twentieth-century living. This book is based upon many years of teaching general anthropology courses in university settings and also many years of experience in using materials of the science in military and other special training programs.

In format, the text is organized to answer a series of problems on which cultural anthropology is focused. Each problem area is stated. After it is analyzed a critical discussion follows to make clear how the particular conclusion has been reached by anthropologists. The key anthropological thinkers on that particular problem are referred to, and case illustrations are given, particularly classic or critical cases from anthropological literature. Any instructor using the text, or any reader for that matter, can then supplement these special cases by additional ones from personal experience or from collateral reading. Question and answer sequences, exercises, diagrams, and illustrations are freely introduced to help organize thought. For each problem, collateral references are suggested in the text and at the end of each chapter for further study if desired. A glossary of technical terms is available as an appendix, as well as a bibliography covering all references made in the text to the anthropological literature. Because this is designed as a text in English, bibliographic references from the rich anthropological literature in other languages have been minimized.

For use in an elementary course in cultural anthropology, several chapters are mature, and an instructor may want to limit reading assignments to selected propositions and paragraphs. This is so with Chapter VI, which reviews in summary fashion the major theories and concepts which have developed in relation to culture, society, and personality. Nevertheless, in the writer's opinion, these materials are vital to anyone who wants to come to grips with the ideas of the discipline, and the keen student will find them of central interest. Three other chapters could also be handled in a truncated way in an elementary or shorter course: III, "Culture and Biological Heritage," IV, "The Growth of Culture," XVI, "Cultural Stability and Change."

Consideration was given to introducing a separate chapter on "Culture and Personality" (or "Ethnopsychology" as it is sometimes called). This relatively new field is now a major specialty for a small but growing number of cultural anthropologists. It seemed best, however, to introduce the main theoretical and illustrative materials on this topic in Chapter VI when discussing modern systems of thought regarding group and individual behavior—see especially Problems 29, 30, and 31. Further relevant materials are found in Chapters II (Problem 7, definition of personality), III (Problems 12, 13, animal and human learning and interaction, evaluation of psychological tests), X (Problem 46, the cycle of individual life), XII (Problems 59, 60, conformity, normality, and abnormality), and XVI (Problem 82, the individual and change).

The text attempts to break new ground by presenting systematically in a series of carefully worded propositions the contributions of cultural anthropology at this stage to scientific knowledge. These statements are designed to bring out areas of agreement, usually explicit but sometimes

implicit, in the intellectual operations of the discipline. Similar statements of sorts are scattered through many texts, but only in rare cases do anthropologists recognize any clear-cut formulation in standardized wording, e.g., as in a well-known definition of "acculturation" (contact between cultures) developed by a professional committee in 1936 (see Index). Here and there in the text a proposition covers an area of thought still in dispute, in which case this is made clear in the accompanying analysis. Necessarily, considering the wide sweep of problems covered, the discussions have at times to be cut off rather starkly; but in every case references are included which can carry the interested student further into the important literature.

This work is in important respects a "family" affair in that the writer's wife, Marie M. Keesing, helped extensively with the creative as well as the editing phases of the text, and his two sons, one an advanced graduate student and one a university senior at the time, worked through it in critical detail. Drs. George D. Spindler and Louise Spindler gave the first draft an over-all careful reading, with great profit to the final text. Sections in later draft were also read, and useful suggestions made, by other Stanford colleagues, Drs. Bernard J. Siegel, Bert A. Gerow, and Alan R. Beals. I wish to thank the entire College Department of Rinehart and Company for careful and competent editorial assistance.

F.M.K.

Stanford University, California
February, 1958

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