

Compte rendu

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NOTICES ET COMPTES RENDUS

GÉOGRAPHIE HUMAINE

Man, Culture, and Animals. Edited by Anthony LEEDS and Andrew P. VAYDA. Washington, D. C., American Association for the Advancement of Science, 1965, vii and 304 pages, \$8.00

During the past several years more and more behavioral sciences have come to realize that beyond the social and cultural realms a whole complex of environmental factors exist and influence given cultures. *Man, Culture, and Animals* is one of the most recent attempts by social scientists to move away from cultural determinism and to emphasize the importance of these environmental relationships. Published as a result of a 1961 symposium entitled: « The Role of Animals in Human Ecological Adjustment », the volume is not simply a regurgitation of symposium proceedings, since fresh outside material is included to widen the range of represented cultures and animals. The result is a rather unique text encompassing biological data, cultural analyses, and interrelationships between the two. For this reason ecologists as well as geographers and anthropologists will find mutual interest in the book.

Unfortunately, several criticisms can be leveled at the text, not least of which is that most of the symposium papers are years out of date. This « time-knowledge » gap is least noticed where articles relate to traditional or little acculturated societies. But in other cases considerable culture change has occurred, such as in Tibet (Downs and Ekvall, pp. 169-185), and in Uganda (Deshler, pp. 153-169), without professional recognition. Even more surprising, however, is the total disregard in the volume for the methodologies of general systems theory and statistical analysis. Both recently have modified the theories, opinions, and outlooks of many behavioral scientists.

An unusual aspect of the book is that it contains three brief papers which, in a way, review the book. Vayda opens the text and places the volume in proper perspective by discussing « Anthropologists and Ecological Problems ». Here he refers to methodological works by Fosberg (1963) and Geertz (1963), which surpass to a large extent the methods displayed in some of the symposium papers. The articles of Aschmann (pp. 259-270) and Collins (pp. 271-282) are reviews of the papers occurring in the book rather than personal contributions to the symposium theme.

Collins looks at the volume as a philosopher. He sees two themes of unity running through the book: the obvious relationships between human and animal populations, and the similarity in method of analysis. Too many papers are mere description and do not include explanation, thus they are ignored by Collins. The common method of analysis mentioned by Collins is the functional examination and interpretation of all environmental variables rather than just the cultural factors generally stressed by anthropologists.

The significant fact brought out in the majority of the papers is that there is an optimum population for both men and animals in any environment; through their cultural institutions humans attempt to control their populations and those of their domesticated animals. It is also stressed, particularly by Leeds, that environment often takes a hand in epitomizing this control system independently of man when the optimum situation goes above or below certain critical ranges. Leeds himself admits that the orderliness of Chukchi institutions is almost embarrassing. One wonders if the intimate relationships between animal disease, marriage and apprenticeship, and animal herding can be quite so harmonious.

Similarly, Harris' discussion of the cow in India shows that the religious taboo is the outcome of economic function and that the first sight reaction of the cow eating man's livelihood is counter-acted by the universal use of cow dung, beef by the casteless, bullocks for agriculture, and so on. Thus we see that ritual behavior may be strongly effected by the natural ecology of an environment

Aschmann's comments are particularly relevant since he is a geographer reviewing primarily an anthropological book. He points out that an economic geographer could draw comparisons between cattle in a Hindu society and western ranching. Aschmann realizes that the truth of the ecological hypothesis in human society depends upon the rationality of man's culture, whether conscious or unconscious. Likewise he states that the only way to regain areas that modern man is deliberately destroying for short-term gain is to incorporate the ecological ideology.

A major complaint of Aschmann is that the volume is too heavily biased in favor of subsistence or semi-subsistence economies. Perhaps this can be expected in an anthropological text, but it is unfortunate in that Leeds and Vayda are aiming at a larger audience than the proceedings alone would have envisaged.

One of the most useful results of the volume is that it illuminates the continua on which societies may be placed, even though the upper parts of the continua are inadequately described. For example, there is the continuum between hunting to complete domestication to releasing back to the wild; another is the relationship between food requirements, food tolerance, and latitude; a third is the effect of technology on the size of enterprise.

In summary, one feels that Leeds and Vayda have proven their point that man should be studied in terms of his complete environment rather than individually in terms of culture. The book definitely fills an empty niche. However, its most general fault is that of nearly all symposia proceedings: another book with newer methods and material on the same subject is already needed.

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Future environments of North America. Edited by F. FRASER DARLING and John P. MILTON. vx+767 pages, illus., ref., index. Garden City, New York, The Natural History Press, 1966. \$12.50.

« In the past our continent was big and our impact on it was small. America was beautiful. Today our economy and population have grown. The continent seems to be getting smaller, and what is still beautiful may not be beautiful for long. »

These formidable remarks stress the underlying theme of *Future Environments of North America*. The volume is a fresh, uninhibited, and sharply focused permanent record of a four-day conference convened by the Conservation Foundation at Warrenton, Virginia, in 1965. Thirty-four contributed papers and six vigorous discussions are reproduced in full, grouped as they were at the symposium into six sections: I. The Organic World and Its Environment (Deputy Chairman, Ian McTaggart-Cowan); II. Regions: Their Developmental History and Future (Deputy Chairman, Edward H. Graham); III. Economic Patterns and Processes (Deputy Chairman, Joseph L. Fisher); IV. Social and Cultural Purposes (Deputy Chairman, Clarence J. Glacken); V. Regional Planning and Development (Deputy Chairman, Christopher Tunnard); VI. Organization and Implementation (Deputy Chairman, Samuel H. Ordway). Each section begins with an introduction by its deputy chairman, followed by summary remarks from the speakers concerning their own papers. The papers are then presented and each section concludes with a general but frank discussion by all participants. An introduction to the book is presented by F. Fraser Darling, while a penetrating summary of the conference and papers is given by Lewis Mumford. Two gratifying aspects about the book are that it has been published reasonably soon after the symposium, and that approximately one-fourth of the distinguished participants at the conference and, thus, authors of papers, were professional geographers.

The book brings together in one unit the views and opinions of nearly forty ecologists, geographers, regional planners, economists, jurists, and conservationists about the true nature of