

EVERY MAN HIS WAY: REVIEW AND PARENTHESES

Dundes, Alan, ed. Every Man His Way: Readings in Cultural Anthropology; Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, Prentice-Hall Inc., 1968. 551 - xv pp. \$4.95 paper.

As a "communication for students of folklore," the FORUM concentrates upon reviewing books of particular folklore interest, but owing to their extraordinary numbers, many books which can be classified firmly in the folklore camp never succeed in carving a niche for themselves in this journal's book review section. Therefore, it is only with a certain hesitancy that we include a review of Every Man His Way, since it falls squarely in the anthropological camp. Our main reason for reviewing this book is that its editor, Alan Dundes, is one of Folklore's more illustrious Ph.D.'s, so it is with a certain sense of pride and curiosity that we wish to investigate his success in the anthropological discipline, folklore's more esteemed half-sister.

Every Man His Way lacks the neat divisions based on the aspects of culture as often found in other readers in anthropology. The instructor must read all the articles before constructing his syllabus; otherwise he is likely to assign "Ibo Punishments for Adultery," which is a yellow-journalistic hearsay report by a District Commissioner included in the volume to exemplify "ethnocentric bias," to be read for the class sessions devoted to the study of primitive law and social control. The articles must be carefully evaluated if the instructor wishes to make them fit the established categories of anthropological textbooks and classroom lectures.

Every Man His Way has been assembled with style (how else would you characterize an anthology that reprints selections from David Livingstone [of "I presume" fame]) lacking in other anthropology readers. There is a variety of essays ranging from strict analytical pieces to humorous parodies (extending even beyond "Body Ritual Among the Nacirema" which is the anthropologists' traditional standard of didactic humor) and native reports. Dundes's headnotes attempt to delineate the anthropological value of each article, though he carries this too far with "At Home with the Aborigines", a parody of the field experience reprinted from Punch. The reason the article is included is because it is fun, and fun requires little justification (although one wonders whether the introductory student has sufficient exposure to ethnographic reports to fully appreciate some of the more subtle elements of satire), thus the headnote to this article seems a little pretentious.

Dundes has reprinted some classic articles. It remains for the instructor to determine how to organize them and use them most effectively, though the headnotes certainly provide direction. Included in this category are: Kroeber's "Classificatory Systems of Relationships;" Firth's "Work and Wealth in Primitive Communities," an excellent statement on primitive economics excerpted from his book Human Types; the much and unjustly maligned statement by Frazer on sympathetic magic from The (New) Golden Bough; and Benedict's statement on the concept of culture in "The Science of Custom", an article that she used as the basis for her first chapter of Patterns of Culture.

One classic seems out of place in the reader; Tylor's "On the Method of Investigating the Development of Institutions: Applied to Laws of Marriage and Descent." This article, a theoretical masterpiece in its day, is not for the introductory student. Such a student could be better introduced to Tylor through excerpts of his first chapter of Primitive Culture or selections from his Researches into the Early History of Mankind. Dundes's selection of "On the Method..." reflects his awe of and respect for Tylor's genius rather than a concern for the introductory student.

Among other excellent essays reprinted are Dorothy Lee's "Codifications of Reality: Lineal and Nonlineal" which attempts to prove that reality is not necessarily perceived and organized in the same way; Max Gluckman's "The Reasonable Man in Barotse Law" which illustrates the function of the hitherto unrecognized concept of the "reasonable man" which mediates between a society's law and its judges' decisions; Schneider and Homans analysis of the implications of American kinship terminology in "Kinship Terminology and the American Kinship System"; the provocative discussion in the "Concept of Culture" by Kluckhohn and Kelly (not Kroeber); and Laura Bohannan's "Shakespeare in the Bush" which should be required reading for all students of comparative literature. All these articles are brilliantly conceived and are potentially exciting points of departure for discussion of myriads of anthropological concepts and concerns.

In several instances, however, Dundes has reprinted unwisely; principally the article by Paul Fejos "Magic, Witchcraft and Medical Theory in Primitive Cultures." There is little to recommend this article, save that it attempts to be a descriptive survey of the area by someone who, Dundes informs us, is both a physician and an anthropologist. Fejos, however, misuses and confuses basic terms and concepts, and the article is virtually unusable unless the instructor is willing to make extensive qualifications and corrections. As it stands, the article can only serve to misinform. In the area of magic and witchcraft (long a folklorist's province) one would have expected Dundes to display a more critical acumen.

Dundes, too, could have chosen better material than the dull, heavy-handed "The Concept of the Soul Among the Vandau" (though the article successfully transmits a feeling for Boas), and the student might have benefitted more from sections of Alan Merriam's first chapter of The Anthropology of Music than his "Purposes of Ethnomusicology: An Anthropological View."

Nevertheless, Dundes has shown originality in the range of sources he has utilized in compiling his reader. The style of an introductory book is of importance; it must consist of solid social science, unburdensome reading and good humor if it is to be appreciated by the student beyond the context of his final examination. Dundes has generally chosen his selections with good scholarly sense, wit and style. As such, Every Man His Way will prove a valuable aid to the teacher of anthropology (not the scholar who happens to be teaching, often against his will; nothing will help him, and God help his students).

Finally we ought to consider the message of the title and contents of Dundes's new book. It may seem that the rhetoric of the latter part of this review is occasionally (rarely) intemperate. There

are several (good) reasons for this:

- 1) No one listens to temperate statements anymore;
- 2) The intemperance has heuristic intentions;
- 3) Dundes is not really being singled out from other editors of anthropological readers (notice that occasionally the words Dundes and anthropology are used interchangeably);
- 4) I felt that Dundes could take it (he does teach at Berkeley);
- 5) He is not ultimately responsible; he was only doing his job.

Every Man His Way begins with a section called "The Pre-Scientific Period" which includes short selections from Old Testament law, Herodotus describing the Persians and Scythians, Ahmed ibn Fadlan on a bunch of Scandinavians who happen upon the Volga in 922, a survey by Katherine George of Westerners' descriptions of African culture between 1400-1800, Darwin on the Tierra del Fuegians, and the previously mentioned report on Ibo punishments. The intent of this fifty pages of the "Pre-Scientific Period" is to acquaint the reader with the concept of ethnocentrism and its manifestation in the ethnographic report. (There is no ethnocentrism in the implication that the present should be known as the "Scientific Period"). Dundes, in his informative commentarial and bibliographic headnotes, succeeds in pointing out the nature of early reports and their concern with the exotic or bizarre, which tended towards evaluative statements or distorted reporting because of the reporter's solid entrenchment in his own culture's norms and values. One supposes that the introductory anthropology instructor's second magical feat in the classroom (after proving that the Bible is not divine because the Flood episode in Genesis has astounding parallels in the Epic of Gilgamesh et al.) is to reveal to students the tremendous extent to which they are embedded in the values of their own culture, and how wrong they are to make evaluative statements (unless they perhaps are unsentimentally favorable) about customs and institutions in other cultures (especially primitive), because these customs and institutions are vital to the people that practice them. Their customs and institutions must be evaluated in terms of their own cultural system. (This is otherwise known as cultural relativism.) Now, emphasizing the concepts of ethnocentrism and cultural relativism is important, especially for a female student born under a cornstalk in the Midwest whose only concern is achieving the status of cheerleader of the Eureka College basketball team, who is enrolled in introductory anthropology by design of the education faculty alone, and who in her most benevolent moods persists in referring to Tikopia social organization as "animalistic". (I admit that there perhaps exists a broader category of students than the one described who at least might profit from learning about ethnocentrism and cultural relativism.) Nevertheless, the case has always been stated as one-sided. Anthropologists (at least introductory anthropologists) have virtually tabooed all evaluative statements about other cultures beyond the terms "functional" and "dysfunctional" (and we know that nothing is ever really dysfunctional). Though we may envy, we cannot in good faith accede to the isolationist view of the anthropologist. We are called upon to make evaluative statements about other cultures every day of our lives, and then we must often act upon them. I daresay that very few anthropologists (and possibly even fewer blacks) are willing to evaluate segregation or lynching in the culture of the American South solely in terms of functionalism or dysfunctionism. Perhaps we are still able to

appreciate the caste system in India or the occasional headhunt in Borneo, but these are places we can easily avoid unless we are anthropologists who deliberately choose to seek out and study such vital cultural patterns.

Nothing is relative like cultural relativism (to use a folk expression). Perhaps no one is more willing to recognize the vitality and meaningfulness of Aztec sacrifice or Ibo punishment than I. It is just a matter of rising above one's values. There are thousands of students in the university today who have no trouble at all rising above their culture's values (it is in this area that we have generally failed to recognize the roles of Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon as great educators), before they reach the introductory anthropology lecture hall. They have internalized the concept before the instructor even succeeds in naming it. But cultural relativism is a concept meaningful mainly in the classroom. Outside we are called to evaluate and act. The world is shrinking (or is the universe expanding?). The headhunter from Borneo is my next-door neighbor and all that anthropology can offer is a criterion of functionalism with a dash of condescending romantic appreciation as tools with which to face the (hostile) world. Anthropology has taught us less than it believes if its entire moral philosophy is encapsuled in Every Man His Way. It's just not that simple.

Elliott Oring
Folklore Institute

Ingersoll, Ernest. Dragons and Dragon Lore; New York, Payson & Clarke Ltd., 1928. 190 - xii pages. Index, bibliography, 20 illustrations. Reissued by Singing Tree Press, Detroit, 1968. L.C. 68-26577. \$8.50.

Another in the proliferation of Gale reprint editions, Ingersoll's Dragons and Dragon Lore is a popular work which synthesizes late nineteenth and early twentieth century English academic writings on dragons and dragon-like figures and their representational aspects in Asian and Western European religious belief systems and iconography. English attention to the sources and forms of dragon belief reached a highpoint in the period 1880-1930. The ascendancy of dragon lore scholarship was a natural outgrowth of Victorian interest in Indo-European cultural and historical relations, and the intriguing but highly problematic subject matter attracted the attention of E. S. Hartland, Thomas Bulfinch, J. C. Lawson, J. F. Campbell, and a host of other scholars, whose names are scarcely familiar today in folklore circles. Ingersoll patches together a commentary culled largely from these earlier writers to advance the thesis that dragon belief, although without factual basis, ultimately had its origins in Egypt and Mesopotamian etiological myths. From these beginnings, notions about grotesque, heterogeneous reptilian-mammalian-aquiline creations branched eastward through India to the Orient, and westward through Greece into Europe and Celtic Britain. Ingersoll suggests that dragon lore in the Far East has characteristically reflected traditional ideas about nature's power of benevolence and malevolence, procreation and destruction, while in the West the ambivalent aspects of dragon belief were almost wholly appropriated by Christianity during the Middle Ages and aligned with the devil as an allegorical representation