Book Reviews

Man in the Primitive World. An introduction to anthropology. E. Adamson Hoebel. McGraw-Hill, New York, ed. 2, 1958. xvi + 678 pp. Illus. $9; text ed., $6.75.

The late Ralph Linton once remarked that an author who attempts to write an introductory book in anthropology faces the same dilemma as does a swimming instructor. He may throw the neophyte into a sea of small facts to sink or eventually swim. Or, he may choose to start with theory with the hope that the student will get bearings which will not be lost as he faces the reality of data. Linton concluded his analogy by saying that neither method had proved successful and that anthropology is a science which needs more than one introduction since it subsumes so many differing disciplines and traditions.

Hoebel's revised text will serve to reduce the pessimism which a number of anthropologists have shared with Linton. Using traditional chapter headings, the author manages to wed problem and subject matter in an unusually successful manner. Lucidly written, *Man in the Primitive World* does an excellent job of setting forth the central interest areas of anthropology. Eclectic in approach, the author manages not to become pallid and political in his choice of quoted positions and authorities.

Although they are hardly serious in the perspective of the full volume, I have certain reservations which are exemplified in chapters 32 and 33. Chapter 32, "Language and culture," in attempting to fill a gap so evident in many introductory texts, seems to overstress psycholinguistics and glottochronology. These are promising leads rather than tested analytic tools. And, while many linguists and anthropologists (including myself) share Hoebel's concern with these approaches, an introductory text possibly should include a more complete statement to the student concerning the status of their validation. Similarly, chapter 33, "Personality and culture," while clearly written, omits mention of a number of research techniques whose testing is part of the central focus of this aspect of the discipline. Yet, it is the author's right to decide whether to stress methodology or results in an introductory presentation. And he must make this decision or the book will soon become too large for the student's purse. At $6.75, the text edition is probably priced at the outside limit.

Well organized, clearly written, and beautifully printed and illustrated, *Man in the Primitive World* (a somewhat regrettable title) should find a place in the library of the general scholar as well as in the list of basic textbooks in anthropology. It clearly demonstrates that Hoebel's continuing contributions to the study of comparative law rest on a firm acquaintance with general anthropology.

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Nuclear Structure. Leonard Eisenbud and Eugene P. Wigner. Princeton University Press, Princeton, N.J., 1958. viii + 128 pp. $4.

Originally prepared as a section for the *Handbook of Physics* (McGraw-Hill), this small book provides a succinct description of the models and phenomena pertinent to an understanding of nuclear structure. The description is for the most part qualitative; however, quantitative formulae are often quoted. To write a short book on such a broad subject is difficult. To write a short *understandable* book is an even greater task. The authors have succeeded in selecting those comparisons and consequences of the various theories that contribute most to an understanding of the real significance of the numerous approaches to nuclear structure.

It is of course risky to write a book on the quickly changing field of nuclear physics, and the authors are quite naturally guilty of making the same mistakes that every physicist was making at the time of publication (for example, the choice of scalar-tensor-pseudoscalar for the beta-decay interaction). These mistakes do not, however, detract noticeably from the general value of the summary of nuclear structure. Topics covered include the energy systematics of complex nuclei, the properties of nuclear levels, nuclear reactions, the nucleon-nucleon interaction, α-decay, β-decay, and γ-decay. Emphasis is placed on the relations that these topics have to models of the nucleus.

Literature references are given at the end of the book, with brief comments relating to roles played by these investigations in the development of the subject. This manner of presentation is particularly pleasing and useful.

While the book can in no way be considered comprehensive, it is to be recommended as a fine brief survey of present attempts to understand the nucleus.

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White Dwarfs. E. Schatzman. North-Holland, Amsterdam; Interscience, New York, 1958. vii + 180 pp. Illus.

The author has done brilliant work on the structure of, and the energy generation in, white dwarfs, and one may, therefore, expect considerable emphasis on theory rather than on observations in this monograph. Yet, it seems to me, this has resulted in a serious unbalance between the two. The discussion of the discovery of white dwarfs is quaint, to say the least. Thus, in the count for 1950, "discoverers" are named (rather incorrectly) for one-third of the total, but the name of the person who found the other two-thirds are omitted. Twenty-two white dwarfs are mentioned as components of binaries, though 33 had been published before the book was written.

One extensive table and two diagrams were reproduced from an article I published in 1952—with reference duly given, but I never was asked about this. Some of my discussions of, and conclusions from, these data are presented as if they were the author's own. Altogether, this hasty hash of the observational material takes up 13 pages, plus three pages of bibliography, while 160 pages are given over to theoretical considerations. Here the author is in his own field and has succeeded admirably in producing a logically developed and fascinatingly presented summary of our present knowledge—and speculation. The difference between the two is not sufficiently stressed, however, and often conclusions derived from pure theory are described as things *known*. Thus, the author laments the fact that the masses of only two white dwarfs are known (this is correct) but then states categorically that the range in mass *is* small and, still later, produces two separate diagrams in which