

Review of Primitive Art and Society, by Anthony Forge. American Anthropologist, December 1976, p. 904.

BOOK REVIEWS

General, Applied, and Theoretical

Primitive Art and Society. Anthony Forge, ed. Preface by Raymond Firth. London: Oxford University Press (published for the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research), 1973. xxii + 286 pp. \$21.00 (cloth).

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The result of a symposium sponsored in 1967 by the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, this handsome book includes a preface by Firth, an introduction by Forge, and 13 original and variously enlightening essays on primitive art. It is surprising that in a well-illustrated book devoted to a consideration of art in its social context (Firth, p. vi), only a few photographs document artworks in their context of setting and event. Most of the analyses are by anthropologists belonging to different schools of thought; but there are also two studies by well-known art historians and a philosophically oriented essay by Jones. There is obviously great diversity in the geographical and ethnic coverage, in the types of societies studied and the themes and viewpoints developed in the work. The ethnographic and esthetic data cover societies in West Africa, Australia, North America, Polynesia, and New Guinea. In accordance with its main objective (Firth, p. vi), the book includes "specific studies from particular societies" and "more speculative" sociologically oriented studies, presented in comparative perspective. Most authors concentrate on some particular segment of art, such as masks, paintings, pots, headrests, body decoration, bark cloth. Apart from the specific scope of each chapter, certain aspects are frequently touched upon, such as ambiguity in art, art as communication, art and myth, sexual division and expression of social status in art, primitive art as a system, plurality of meanings of art, or the artist and his training, his personality and status, his choices and influences.

This dense volume contains many new data and challenging viewpoints that foreshadow important theoretical developments in the study of art (Forge, p. xxii). In contrast to the many, often repetitious handbooks, surveys and readers on primitive

art published in the last 25 years, this is a trend-setting piece of scholarship. On the other hand, the work suffers from a certain heterogeneity and does only explore a sample of possible approaches to the relationships between art and its social context. Both situations are probably inevitable. The heterogeneity is not a weakness in itself; for in the neglected, and inadequately explored area of primitive art, there is ample need for highly different approaches, in order to place the abundant mass of facts in a better scholarly perspective.

It is impossible to do justice to the merits of each contribution; these will surely be brought out in various critical usages.

This book is warmly recommended as an enriching document to the anthropologist and the nonanthropologist, to the sceptic and enthusiast alike. Its greatest value lies in the wealth of many new and unique data about individual arts and in a certain way of viewing them. Indirectly, the work shows how many tasks lie ahead of us in primitive art studies, such as: the analysis of the complete range of types of artworks produced in single cultures; the ephemeral and minimal arts; the relationships between the visual, verbal, musical and choreographic arts; the connections between the arts and the other manufactured and natural objects; the types and levels of communication; the social context; the economic and social aspects connected with the acquisition, the ownership, the transfer, the replacement, the inheritance, and the destruction of artworks.

The War Disease. Norman Z. Alcock. Oakville, Ontario: Canadian Peace Research Institute, 1972. iv + 238 pp. n.p. (paper).

Military Deterrence in History: A Pilot Cross-Historical Survey. Raoul Naroll, Vern L. Bullough, and Frada Naroll. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1974. lxii + 416 pp. \$20.00 (cloth).

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Naroll and his associates, as well as Alcock, advocate systematic research on the

problem of peace solutions to international conflict. Naroll, Bullough, and Alcock discuss the results of their own research in *Military Deterrence in History: The War Disease*, a book of research dealing with

In reading *The War Disease*, the researcher will find a comparative historical approach useful as well as attitude surveys. The book is a Peace Research Institute publication. Peace Research Institute topics include military and laboratory ev

However, the book is about the value of comparative studies, as Alcock discusses how such epistemological deficiencies in the when Alcock is unaware of their collected. For example, a multinational study of attitudes (The Firth was not based on populations of the of the respective theless, he argues war-peace attitudes enduring differences "ferent cultures" (sampling problem: generalize the findings the student population involved, much less Nor should we have the study reveal between the count

After his extensive studies, most of cultural and learning Alcock comes to the aggression is an irrational (197). An uncritical Lorenz and Darwin account for this an

In *Military Deterrence in History*, Naroll and his associates determine whether decreases or increases evaluate the relationship versus Arms Race cross-historical surveys. From preindustrial civilizations, Egyptian, Hebrew, Western, Russian, Swiss Confederacy,