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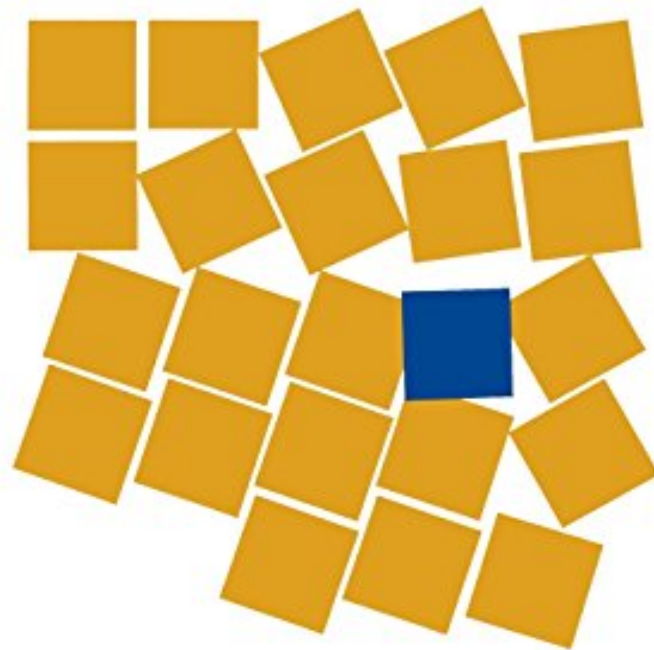
Hortense Powdermaker

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Stranger and Friend

The Way of
an Anthropologist
by Hortense Powdermaker

"The book is absolutely excellent...a unique fascinating account of the work of one of our leading anthropologists."
—Colin M. Turnbull



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#808821 in Books Hortense Powdermaker 1967-04-17Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 7.70 x .80 x 5.10l, .50 #File Name: 0393004104320 pagesStranger and Friend | File size: 34.Mb

Hortense Powdermaker : Stranger and Friend: The Way of an Anthropologist before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Stranger and Friend: The Way of an Anthropologist:

1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Dated but excellentBy Howard E. BorckFor participant observation research and analysis, excellent. Most of material is over 40 years old yet still interesting. Excellent reference for a researcher weighing the influence of their own values on research methods and findings.1 of 2 people found the

following review helpful. Decent textbook
By jintokiI had to read this as required reading. It was very interesting in terms of content and the way things are presented, but it's not a book I would normally read on my own. 4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. "how I done it"
By Bob Newman Compared to the number of ethnographies and serious studies of cultural interest that exist in the world, the number of books on anthropological methodology are few. Certain books on "participant observation"---the classic method of anthropologists (and some sociologists as well)---can be found in libraries, but works on the experience and thought processes of anthropologists in the field are far less common. Even 'how-to-do-it' courses for budding anthropologists are found only rarely. Anthropological field work remains a kind of "vision quest", similar to those embarked upon by Native American youths in the old days. The anthropologist is expected to leave the campus and library, journey to another society, immerse him/herself in its culture, and come back with fresh insights. It is a kind of sink-or-swim situation and resembles initiation rites more than a little. An anthropologist who has not done field work, who has not undergone this ritual, cannot really be called an anthropologist.
Hortense Powdermaker was one of the earliest women to do field work. A student of the famous Malinowski in Britain, she travelled in the 1920s to the Melanesian island of New Ireland, now part of Papua New Guinea, to study a remote village. In those days, anthropologists specialized in describing "whole cultures", the more isolated the better, rather than focussing on a specific problem or question. Later, in the `30s, she conducted research in and around Indianola, Mississippi---an extremely delicate operation, given the rigid segregation then in force. She went on to study Hollywood and then the influence of media among Africans in Zambia's Copper Belt. She taught all her life and passed away at age 73 in 1970. After reading STRANGER AND FRIEND, I deeply regretted not having had the chance to meet her, because she impressed me strongly as a most decent, open, intelligent human being. This book should be required reading for every young anthropologist heading for field work. The problems of culture shock, the difficulties of participating in local life as well as looking on it with a detached eye, entry problems, how to keep notes, when to do a survey and when not to, how to weave your way through or around local factions or rivals contesting the same turf, and the question of questioning your own perceptions---all these and many more issues are discussed in a very readable, interesting style. Even if the world has changed, gotten so globalized, her work is still of importance. What comes through very strongly in Powdermaker's work is her feeling for common humanity. She could empathize with anyone, anywhere and perhaps become friends with them even if, for them, she was a stranger from a strange land. At a time when most Westerners saw Pacific islanders as mere "natives", she could live, eat and dance with them, count a few as friends. At a time when most white Americans saw "Negroes" as "the other" and usually an "inferior other" at that, she worked, ate, and socialized with them without difficulty. Nowadays this presents no problem, but in the 1930s, she could have been taking her life in her hands. She was a woman with guts, and a belief in the equality of Man at a time when it was rare. I admired her no end, and thought that her honest portrayal of how she did her research was well worth 5 stars.

"The book is absolutely excellent . . . a unique fascinating account of the work of one of our leading anthropologists."
Colin M. Turnbull "Her book is all about people. . . . The publishers say of it that 'field work in its personal and objective dimension is placed under a kind of microscope. The book is a must for all field workers in the social sciences.' That claim does not seem to me excessive." Edmund Leach, New York Review of Books "There are few books which are as informative of what it means to be a field-worker in social science as Hortense Powdermaker's Stranger and Friend. This book should be must reading both for scholars and students." Seymour M. Lipset, Harvard University "Stranger and Friend is a passionate plea for anthropology as a human discipline as well as a science, as an all-engrossing life experience as well as a profession, and increasingly as a subject in the curriculum of graduate and undergraduate studies." Margaret Mead, American Museum of Natural History "This is just the kind of book needed in anthropology today. It tells objectively, but in warm and human terms, how important research was done. It contributes to methodology and to the history of the science of anthropology." Charles Wagley, Columbia University "This is an essential book for anyone interested in the problems of an anthropologist at work." Cornelius Osgood, Peabody Museum of Natural History

From the Back Cover 'Stranger and Friend is a passionate plea for anthropology as a human discipline as well as a science, as an all-engrossing life experience as well as a profession, and increasingly as a subject in the curriculum of graduate and undergraduate studies.' --Margaret Mead, American Museum of Natural History.