

Mind Active, Mind Static

A. Kimball Romney and Roy Goodwin D'Andrade (Eds.)

Transcultural Studies in Cognition. Part 2, Vol. 66, #3, American Anthropologist. Washington, D. C.: American Anthropological Association, June 1964. Pp. 253.

Reviewed by PATRICIA GREENFIELD

The editors of this volume are anthropologists A. Kimball Romney at Harvard University and Roy Goodwin D'Andrade at Stanford. Chapter authors include the authors as well as Brent Berlin, Berkeley; Roger Brown, Harvard University; Charles O. Frake, Stanford; Shirley Hill, Stanford; Dell Hymes, University of Pennsylvania; Sidney M. Lamb, Berkeley; Fred L. Strodbeck, University of Chicago; William C. Sturtevant, Smithsonian Institution.

The reviewer, Patricia Marks Greenfield, is a 1966 PhD in social psychology, Department of Social Relations, Harvard. She spent nine months among the Wolof and French of Senegal in 1963 and 1964 there doing transcultural studies in cognition. These studies are included in *Studies in Cognitive Growth*, recently produced by Bruner, Olver, Greenfield et al. She is staying on at Harvard in the Department of Social Relations.

PARTICIPANTS in the Merida Conference came together to explore the extent to which studies of cognition in each of the three fields of linguistics, anthropology, and psychology might be enriched by developments in the other two. The paths of their inquiry and its discoveries are documented in the present volume. The goal of the conference turned out to require a precise delineation of what it is that each of the three disciplines does, how each one goes about the business of investigating the intellect of man. This comparison of the disciplines, capably drawn by the editors in their introduction, in itself produces increased awareness of what psychology is and is not, what are its assumptions, methods, and findings.

The main body of papers, drafted before the conference to serve as a basis for discussion, is distinguished by the lack of articulation of its parts. The three contributors from the discipline of psychology, Charles Osgood, Shirley Hill, and Fred L. Strodbeck, seem to

have even less in common with one another than with the anthropologists and the linguists. But the conference and, consequently, the book turn into a true dialectic as the participants discover opposing assumptions behind the lack of rapport and as they reconcile them in theoretically significant ways. This aspect of the volume is manifest particularly in the concluding "Summary of Participants' Discussion" by Roy Goodwin D'Andrade and A Kimball Romney and in the "Discussion of the Conference" by Roger Brown, as well as in Dell Hymes's article, "Directions in (Ethno-) Linguistic Theory," to be found in the linguistics section of the book. The last named constitutes a brilliant program for asking psychological and sociological questions about language, questions that are already implicit in the science of linguistics as it now stands. In the anthropological section of the book, Charles O. Frake's "Notes on Queries in Ethnography" is also exceptional for manifesting a deep understanding of psychology's efforts to understand cognition.

AFTER the linguistic, anthropological, and psychological approaches have been related to each other, the benefits which psychology may reap from the other two fields become plain; herein lies the great value of *Transcultural Studies in Cognition* to psychologists. Methodologically, linguistics can show us a precise, 'scientific' way of working with qualitative, all-or-none phenomena. Anthropology, more specifically, ethnography, reminds us that situational contexts must carry much of the burden in explaining how people act in an experimental situation does not suffice because the rules of the game, that is to say, situational constraints, dictate behavior as much as general human abilities and strategies. Granted this fact, anthropology offers valuable suggestions concern-

ing ways of investigating the rules of diverse cultural 'games' and a catalog of important situational domains that may be so studied. Both linguistics and ethnography turn psychological attention to 'overlearned,' culturally stereotyped acts, which are surely as important as individual quirks of behavior. Finally, and perhaps most important, linguistics and ethnography remind the psychologist that, before he discovers antecedent-consequent relations, he has to ascertain the units of stimulus and response that are to be connected in lawful fashion; description must precede prediction.

ON the other hand, the anthropological task of describing a culture is not yet complete and psychology may still have important contributions to make. Roger Brown's concluding article gives some clues as to what these may be. He points out that Piaget, the one great psychologist to concern himself with a descriptive enterprise, differs from ethnoscientists in his approach in an important respect. He studies the mind in action as well as its static category systems. (In fact, the absence of any psychological studies in the Piagetian tradition would seem to be an important gap in the book.) The linguist Hymes and the anthropologists Berlin, Romney, Sturtevant, and Frake complain repeatedly of the problem of defining and delimiting domains or situational contexts within which cognitive structures are to be discovered. The problem may be precisely that they are not looking at the mind in action. They ignore cognitive processes in favor of cognitive products. (D'Andrade and Romney also conclude that psychology studies cognitive processes while anthropology concentrates on shared codes, without considering the implications of this state of affairs.) The role of psychology in solving this problem would seem to be to investigate the dynamic processes by which men generate domains—hierarchically structured into discrete cognitive chunks—relative to particular goals. Thus, domains do not even 'interlock' in any final arrangement; they are created and recreated as new goals arise in new situations. The problem, identified by Hymes, of recognizing the role of linguistic vs. other means of structurization fits at this point. As long as domains of experience are treated as static entities, the problem of their definition and delimitation will never be solved. Roger Brown prescribes a solution in general terms in his closing demand that we study mind in all its aspects, that someone nail together the template and the transformer.