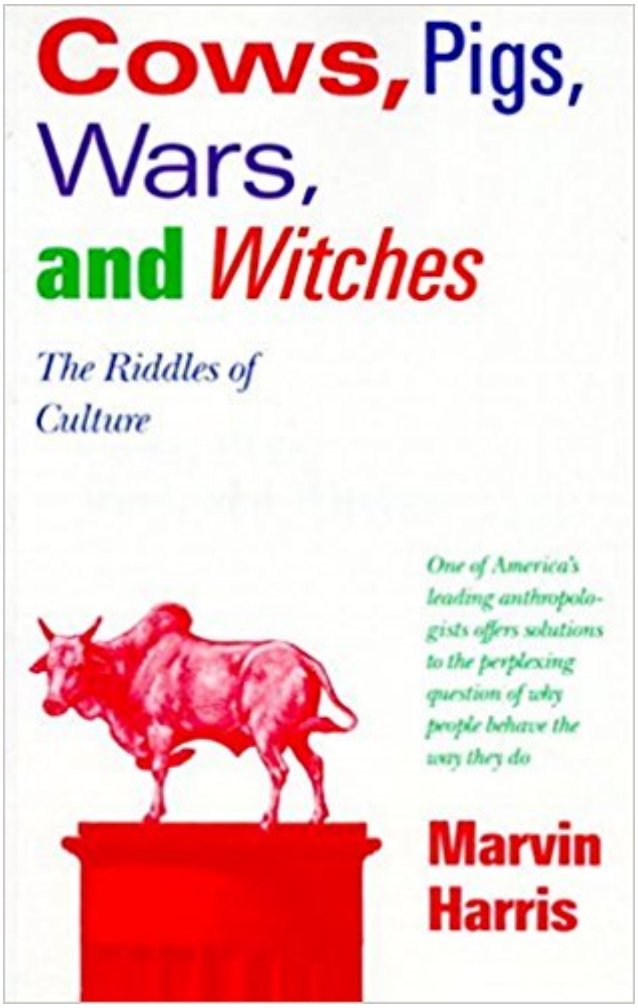
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Cows, Pigs, Wars, And Witches: The Riddles Of Culture



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Synopsis

One of America’s leading anthropolgists offers solutions to the perplexing question of why people behave the way they do.Why do Hindus worship cows? Why do Jews and Moslems refuse to eat pork? Why did so many people in post-medieval Europe believe in witches?Marvin Harris answers these and other perplexing questions about human behavior, showing that no matter how bizarre a people’s behavior may seem, it always stems from identifiable and intelligble sources.

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Customer Reviews

This book challenges those who argue that we can change the world by changing the way people think. Harris shows that no matter how bizarre a people’s behavior may seem, it always stems from concrete social and economic conditions.

Marvin HarrisÃ Â taught at Columbia University from 1953 and from 1963 to 1966 was Chairman of the Department of Anthropology. Ã Â He has lectured by invitation at most of the major colleges and universities in the United States. In addition to field work in Brazil, Mozambique, and Ecuador on the subjects of cross-cultural aspects of race and ethinic relations, the effects of colonialism, and problems of underdevelopment seen in ecological perspective, Harris pioneered in the use of videotape techniques in the study of family life in this country.Author of several books, among them the influential Rise of Anthropological Theory: A History of Theories of Culture and the popoular undergraduate text Culture, Man and Nature: An Introduction to General Anthropology,Ã Â Harris

wrote frequently for Natural History magazine and was a frequent contributor to the professional journals, American AnthropologistÃ Â and Current Anthropology. Ã Â His others books inlcue Cannibals and KingsÃ Â and Cultural Materialism.

This book gives a really detailed and descriptive look at various cultures around the world. It goes into depth about the history of Jesus at the time he lived, and it really sheds light on the way political and religious factors helped form Jesus. It shows what he stood for in a more historical context, as well as they way he was turned from just another "Jewish Bandit" at war against Rome, with anti-roman sentiments, in the tradition of John The Baptist and other poor peasants (or pagans as they were known at the time, which the church than adopted to me anyone who didn't follow them). I definitely found this book interesting, and it compared some cultural themes around the world to also show how nothing was essentially formed "in a vaccuum", and how the reason for some very bizarre seeming traditions actually started with practical survival reasons and evolved.

This book explains the true causes of the nature of the forms of society/culture and how they change. Population growth and consequent over use of natural resources have consistently been the real shaping forces behind all kinds of strange phenomenon. Harris tackles puzzles of human behavior in each chapter and solves it.This book is similar to Cannibals and Kings, but covers: Christianity, cargo cults, witches, potlatch, sacred cows, primitive war, etc.Harris is a pleasure to read, and make good writing seem easy.But the message that comes through is really very serious and essential information to understanding the human condition.

This book helps you understand human nature. The material is dated, but the book is easy to read and accessible to people without formal anthropology training. Each chapter focuses on a different culture and the quirks of that culture and how they enabled helped with survival or societal issues. I have given two of these to high school students who found the book both interesting to read and also enlightening.

My second copy of this book, had to give the other away

Arrived on schedule, product as promised. A great read!

Marvin Harris wrote the first edition of this book in the early 1960's I believe but it doesn't feel dated

at all. His insights are still valid and his reasoning is fascinating to follow. He’s my new favorite author!

Perfect, works great!

A wonderful book, full of insights, but it could use a little updating. Lots has happened since it was written and including more recent history and arguments would make it stronger.

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