

The Art of Hunting Humans: A Radical and Confronting Explanation of the Human Mind

Sidney Mazzi

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Taking a satirical approach to human psychology, The Art of Hunting Humans removes the baggage from study and uncovers ideas that feel fresh and exciting.

Sidney Mazzi's tongue-in-cheek psychology book *The Art of Hunting Humans* analyzes humanity from an alien perspective.

Playful and aiming to spur self-reflection, the text is framed as a guidebook for alien trophy hunters looking to bag a human being. It provides psychological distance as it covers the foibles and contradictions that humans display. Exploring topics like sensation and perception, culture, theories of the mind, and a wide range of lived experiences, the book seeks to define and describe what it means to be human.

The book's questions regarding how meaning is defined, how assumptions are formed, and how behaviors are determined are answered with parables, secondary observations, and extended hypothetical examples that cover psychological ideas about how humans interact with their environments and project, or "hallucinate," their own realities. Such notions recall Gestalt psychology, if they are not named as such. The book takes the same approach to unconscious desires, including academic notions but leaving out specifics from theories and the names of key theorists. This strategy removes the baggage from studying psychology and uncovers ideas that feel fresh and exciting.

Metaphors—including "captain" for consciousness, "cabin" for the brain, and "crew" for the body—run throughout the text, drawing on the notion that hidden associations drive unconscious desires and are like "personal codebooks." The central, and grim, metaphor of hunting humans is never far away. These illustrations are often compelling, but they require unpacking.

Matter-of-fact language, expletives, and a snarky, biting tone keep the book light and approachable. Its Hunting Tips and notes on topics like human communication styles and religion are alternately amusing and flat.

Each chapter is divided into clear sections with defined subheadings that make for easy reading. Accessible summaries of important points are included and incorporate engaging lists and graphics. Summary material also comes in at the end, helping to clarify the text's purpose, but it does not include citations about where the underlying ideas come from.

While it aims to encourage superior living, the book's separate and contradictory work of poking fun at human beings and working to inspire honest consideration of psychological ideas is not always reconciled. Its approach is original, but sometimes at the expense of clarity, and the trade does not always seem worth it.

The Art of Hunting Humans is a satirical psychology book that considers human beings through the scope of an alien's rifle.

JEREMIAH ROOD (May 30, 2019)

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