

CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

GLOBAL FORCES | LOCAL LIVES

THIRD EDITION

JACK DAVID ELLER

Cultural Anthropology

Cultural Anthropology: Global Forces, Local Lives presents all the key areas of cultural anthropology as well as providing original and nuanced coverage of current and cutting-edge topics. An exceptionally clear and readable introduction, it helps students understand the application of anthropological concepts to the contemporary world and everyday life. Thorough treatment is given throughout the text to issues such as globalization, colonialism, ethnicity, nationalism, neoliberalism, and the state.

Changes for the third edition include a brand new chapter on medical anthropology and an updated range of case studies with a fresh thematic focus on China. The book contains a number of features to support student learning, including:

- A wealth of color images
- Definitions of key terms and further reading suggestions in the margins
- Summaries at the end of every chapter
- An extensive glossary, bibliography and index.

Further resources are provided via a comprehensive companion website.

Jack David Eller is Associate Professor (Emeritus) of Anthropology at the Community College of Denver, USA. An experienced teacher and author, his other books for Routledge include *Introducing Anthropology of Religion* (second edition, 2014), *Cultural Anthropology: 101* (2015), and *Culture and Diversity in the United States* (2015).

Praise for this edition:

“*Cultural Anthropology* stands apart from other textbooks and is a truly unique option for introductory anthropology classes. Eller’s use of language is concise and accessible to the entry-level student. More importantly, the text offers a refreshingly clear focus on the relationship between culture, power and the central social issues of the world.”

Andrew Nelson, *University of North Texas, USA*

“I have repeatedly returned to Eller for his ability to make difficult subjects accessible without condescension or dilution. This very good introduction is well written and hits all the marks of four field anthropology (and beyond) while never losing the important focus of culture and the human experience.”

Anjana Mebane-Cruz, *Farmingdale State College, SUNY, USA*

“I would definitely recommend this text to students ... it is simply excellent”

Peter Collins, *Durham University, UK*

“This textbook will undoubtedly prove invaluable to anthropology students, orientating them into the extensive world of contemporary anthropology. Of particular note is the clarity with which anthropology is presented as offering indispensable insights into the globalized world, whilst not shying away from addressing global political and economic concerns.”

Hannah Rumble, *University of Exeter, UK*

“Finally, an introductory textbook with real substance. Eller’s thoughtful account takes his readers seriously, providing them with a no-nonsense rendition of cultural anthropology, both past and present. This book does true justice to our discipline.”

John T. Friedman, *University College Roosevelt Academy/Utrecht University, the Netherlands*

Cultural Anthropology

Global Forces, Local Lives

Third edition

JACK DAVID ELLER

Third edition published 2016
by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

and by Routledge
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

© 2016 Jack David Eller

The right of Jack David Eller to be identified as author of this work has been asserted by him in accordance with sections 77 and 78 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilised in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

Trademark notice: Product or corporate names may be trademarks or registered trademarks, and are used only for identification and explanation without intent to infringe.

First edition published by Routledge 2009
Second edition published by Routledge 2013

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data
A catalog record for this book has been requested

ISBN: 978-1-138-91443-8 (pbk)
ISBN: 978-1-315-69079-7 (ebk)

Typeset in Berkeley
by Keystroke, Station Road, Codsall, Wolverhampton

Contents

	<i>Detailed chapter outline</i>	<i>vii</i>
	<i>List of illustrations</i>	<i>xi</i>
	<i>Introduction</i>	<i>xvii</i>
CHAPTER 1	UNDERSTANDING ANTHROPOLOGY	1
CHAPTER 2	UNDERSTANDING AND STUDYING CULTURE	20
CHAPTER 3	THE ORIGINS OF CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY	42
CHAPTER 4	LANGUAGE AND SOCIAL RELATIONS	61
CHAPTER 5	CULTURAL CONSTRUCTION OF PERSONS: PERSONALITY AND GENDER	81
CHAPTER 6	INDIVIDUALS AND IDENTITIES: RACE AND ETHNICITY	100
	SEEING CULTURE AS A WHOLE #1: WESTERN EXPATRIATES IN THE NEW CHINESE ECONOMY	121
CHAPTER 7	ECONOMICS: HUMANS, NATURE, AND SOCIAL ORGANIZATION	123
CHAPTER 8	KINSHIP AND NON-KIN ORGANIZATION: CREATING SOCIAL GROUPS	146
CHAPTER 9	POLITICS: SOCIAL ORDER AND SOCIAL CONTROL	169
CHAPTER 10	RELIGION: INTERACTING WITH THE NON-HUMAN WORLD	191
	SEEING CULTURE AS A WHOLE #2: A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO BOKO HARAM AND “ISLAMIC VIOLENCE”	213
CHAPTER 11	CULTURAL DYNAMICS: TRADITION AND CHANGE	215
CHAPTER 12	COLONIALISM AND THE ORIGIN OF GLOBALIZATION	233

CHAPTER 13	POLITICS IN THE POSTCOLONIAL WORLD: NATION-BUILDING, CONFLICT, AND BORDERLANDS	253
CHAPTER 14	ECONOMICS IN THE POSTCOLONIAL WORLD: DEVELOPMENT, MODERNIZATION, AND GLOBALIZATION	274
CHAPTER 15	CULTURAL SURVIVAL AND REVIVAL IN A GLOBALIZED WORLD	295
CHAPTER 16	HEALTH, ILLNESS, BODY, AND CULTURE	316
	SEEING CULTURE AS A WHOLE #3: POSSESSED BY DISPOSSESSION— THE SPIRITS OF POSTSOCIALIST SOCIETY IN MONGOLIA	337
	<i>Glossary</i>	339
	<i>Bibliography</i>	355
	<i>Index</i>	372

Detailed chapter outline

CHAPTER 1

UNDERSTANDING ANTHROPOLOGY

The science(s) of anthropology

Physical or biological anthropology 3

Archaeology 4

Linguistic anthropology 5

Cultural anthropology 6

Traditional anthropology and beyond

The continuing evolution of cultural anthropology 7

The “anthropological perspective”

Comparative or cross-cultural study 9

Holism 10

Cultural relativism 10

Practicing anthropology

Careers in anthropology 14

Anthropology in careers 17

Summary

CHAPTER 2

UNDERSTANDING AND STUDYING CULTURE

Defining culture

Culture is learned 22

Culture is shared 23

Culture is symbolic 24

Culture is integrated 26

Culture is an adaptation 26

Culture is produced, practiced, and circulated 27

Culture is in places and things 28

The biocultural basis of human behavior 29

1 Studying culture: method in cultural anthropology 35

Fieldwork in a globalized world: multi-sited ethnography 37

The ethics of fieldwork 38

6 Summary 41

CHAPTER 3

9 THE ORIGINS OF CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY 42

What makes cultural anthropology possible—and necessary 43

14 The pre-modern roots of anthropology 43

The Other in early modern

18 experience and thought 44

The nineteenth century and the “science of man” 48

The history of institutions 49

20 The institutionalization of anthropology

21 in the nineteenth century 50

The twentieth century and the founding of modern anthropology 52

The anthropological crisis of the mid-twentieth century and beyond 55

Summary 60

CHAPTER 4		
LANGUAGE AND SOCIAL RELATIONS	61	
Human language as a communication system		
The structure of language		
Phonology	63	
Morphology or semantics	66	
Grammar or syntax	67	
Pragmatics or sociolinguistics	68	
Making society through language: language and the construction of social reality		
Language as performance	70	
Language and political power	71	
Oral literature and specialized language styles	72	
Proverbs	73	
Riddles	73	
Ritual languages	74	
Paralanguage and non-verbal language	74	
Language change, loss, and competition	75	
Language acquisition and the linguistic relativity hypothesis		
Summary		
CHAPTER 5		
CULTURAL CONSTRUCTION OF PERSONS: PERSONALITY AND GENDER	81	
Cultures and persons, or cultural persons	82	
Blank slates, elementary ideas, and human nature	84	
The psychoanalytic influence on anthropology	86	
American “culture and personality”	86	
Contemporary psychological anthropology	88	
The construction of gendered persons	89	
The rise of feminist anthropology	91	
Gender divisions and differences	91	
The construction of masculinity	93	
The construction of “alternate” genders	95	
Summary		
CHAPTER 6		
INDIVIDUALS AND IDENTITIES: RACE AND ETHNICITY	100	
The anthropology of race	101	
The evolution of the race concept	102	
Measuring and managing mankind	103	
The modern anthropological critique of race	107	
The anthropology of ethnicity	110	
Ethnic culture, ethnic boundary, and ethnic mobilization	111	
Types of ethnic organization and mobilization	115	
The spectrum of intergroup relations between races and ethnic groups	115	
Summary		118
Seeing culture as a whole #1: Western expatriates in the new Chinese economy	70	121
CHAPTER 7		
ECONOMICS: HUMANS, NATURE, AND SOCIAL ORGANIZATION		123
Economy and culture, or economy as culture		124
From “primitive economies” . . .		125
Systems of production	126	
Systems of distribution	133	
. . . to economic anthropology	79	137
Industrialism	137	
Anthropology of work and the corporation	139	
Anthropology of money, finance, and banking	139	
Consumption as cultural practice	82	141
Summary		145
CHAPTER 8		
KINSHIP AND NON-KIN ORGANIZATION: CREATING SOCIAL GROUPS		146
Corporate groups: the fundamental structure of human societies		147
Kinship-based corporate groups		148
Marriage	148	
Residence	155	
Descent	156	
Kinship terminologies	159	
Non-kinship-based corporate groups		160
Sex and gender	161	
Age	162	
Friendship	166	
Summary		168

CHAPTER 9			
POLITICS: SOCIAL ORDER AND SOCIAL CONTROL	169		
Social control: the functions of politics	170		
Sanctions	171		
Power	172		
<i>Up, down, and sideways: modern anthropology traces the paths of power</i>	173		
The anthropology of political systems	176		
Band	177		
Tribe	179		
Chiefdom	180		
State	181		
State seeing, state being	185		
Governmentality: power beyond the state	186		
An anthropology of war	188		
Summary	190		
CHAPTER 10			
RELIGION: INTERACTING WITH THE NON-HUMAN WORLD	191		
The problem of studying religion anthropologically	192		
Defining religion	193		
Functions of religion	195		
The elements of religion: a modular approach to religion	196		
Religious entities: beings and forces	198		
Religious specialists	200		
Additional elements of religion: objects, ritual, and language	205		
Ritual: religion enacted	205		
Religious language: myth	207		
Religious language: prayer	207		
Religious language: ritual languages and other speech acts	208		
Religion, religions, or religious field?	208		
Religion and the everyday	210		
Summary	211		
Seeing culture as a whole #2: a holistic approach to Boko Haram and “Islamic violence”	213		
CHAPTER 11			
CULTURAL DYNAMICS: TRADITION AND CHANGE	215		
The tradition of tradition	216		
Cultural dynamics: the processes of cultural change	220		
<i>Innovation and diffusion</i>	221		
<i>Cultural loss</i>	224		
<i>Acculturation</i>	225		
<i>Genocide and ethnocide</i>	228		
<i>Directed change</i>	230		
Summary	232		
CHAPTER 12			
COLONIALISM AND THE ORIGIN OF GLOBALIZATION	233		
The culture(s) of colonialism	235		
<i>The diversity of colonialism</i>	235		
<i>Diverse eras, diverse agents</i>	237		
Colonialism as cultural practice	240		
<i>The colonization of everyday life</i>	241		
<i>Managing the body, scheduling the tribe: colonial governmentality</i>	243		
The legacy of colonialism	244		
<i>Depopulation</i>	244		
<i>Acculturation and deculturation</i>	246		
<i>Environmental degradation and declining living conditions</i>	246		
<i>Forced resettlement</i>	248		
<i>Creation of “plural societies” and mixing of cultures</i>	248		
<i>Introduction of race-concept and racism</i>	250		
<i>Loss of economic independence</i>	251		
Summary	252		
CHAPTER 13			
POLITICS IN THE POSTCOLONIAL WORLD: NATION-BUILDING, CONFLICT, AND BORDERLANDS	253		
Politics and identity on the path to independence	255		
<i>Settler government</i>	255		
<i>Transition to native self-government</i>	255		
<i>Native resistance and rebellion</i>	256		

Politics and culture in postcolonial states

- Building the nation, imagining the state* 259
- Competing imaginations: ethnicity and other sub-state and trans-state identities* 260
- Fighting for and against the state* 262
- The weak or failed state* 265

Where states cannot reach—or see: politics and identity beyond the state

- Diasporas* 266
- Refugees* 267
- Borderlands* 269
- States, borders, and illegality* 270

Summary

CHAPTER 14

ECONOMICS IN THE POSTCOLONIAL WORLD: DEVELOPMENT, MODERNIZATION, AND GLOBALIZATION

Why economic dependence?

The path to underdevelopment

- Underdevelopment and processes of accumulation* 280

Development: solution and problem

- Development planning and projects* 283
- Development financing* 285

The benefits—and costs—of development

The passing of the classic development model

- Microfinance* 289
- Neoliberalism* 289

Summary

CHAPTER 15

258 CULTURAL SURVIVAL AND REVIVAL IN A GLOBALIZED WORLD 295

Voices from another world 296

From culture to cultural movement 298

- Syncretism* 300
- Millenarianism* 302
- Irredentism* 302
- Modernism/vitalism* 303
- Nativism/traditionalism/fundamentalism* 304

The future of culture, and the culture of the future 307

- The culture of “modernity” and after* 307
- The commodification of culture* 308
- Four views of the future of culture* 311

273

Summary 315

CHAPTER 16

274 HEALTH, ILLNESS, BODY, AND CULTURE 316

275 Toward a medical anthropology 317

- Comparative health care systems* 318
- Healing roles* 320
- Health and the cultural body* 322

276 Sites of medical practice 324

- Medical schools* 324
- Hospitals* 325
- Public health and applied medical anthropology* 328

286 Anthropology and mental illness 329

289 Medical pluralism and the globalization of health care 332

289 Summary 335

293 Seeing culture as a whole #3: possessed by dispossession—the spirits of postsocialist society in Mongolia 337

Illustrations

We are indebted to the people and archives below for permission to reproduce photographs. Every effort has been made to trace copyright holders. Any omissions brought to our attention will be remedied in future editions.

IMAGES

		Homo erectus, Neandertal. Courtesy of the author.	34
1.1	Tangzhuang in a shop. Courtesy of Yu Yue/Getty Images.	2	
1.2	Archaeologists study the sites of past societies, such as Teotihuacan near Mexico City. Courtesy of the author.	4	
1.3	Anthropologists study the city as a distinct social system and way of life. Courtesy of the author.	8	
1.4	The author standing in front of the Basaki Temple in Bali, 1988. Courtesy of the author.	10	
1.5	Warlpiri (Australian Aboriginal) women preparing ritual objects. Courtesy of the author.	14	
2.1	Feral children. © Mary Evans Picture Library/Alamy.	22	
2.2	Culture is composed of symbols, like these Australian Aboriginal artworks. Courtesy of the author.	25	
2.3	Chimpanzees learn to use twigs or grass stems to “fish” for termites, an example of non-human culture. © Minden Pictures/Superstock.	32	
2.4	Hominid fossil skulls (from left to right): Australopithecus afarensis,		
		2.5	A virtual fieldwork site: doing anthropological research in Second Life. From Tom Boellstorff. 2008. <i>Coming of Age in Second Life: An Anthropologist Explores the Virtually Human</i> . Princeton University Press.
		2.6	Bronislaw Malinowski conducting fieldwork with Trobriand Islanders. © Library of the London School of Economics and Political Science (MALINOWSKI/3/18/2).
		3.1	An image of Manchu women, taken during the Laufer Chinese expedition (1901–1904). Courtesy of the American Museum of Natural History (ID 325095).
		3.2	A Blemmyae, one of the “monstrous races” of ancient and medieval literature. © British Library Board. All rights reserved. BL ref: 1023910.691.
		3.3	Utopian literature was an important precursor to modern anthropology. AKG Images.
		3.4	The Renaissance introduced new interests in ancient culture, visual

	perspective, and humanism. AKG Images.	47	6.3	Children in central Australian Aboriginal societies have straight, often blond, hair, challenging the simple racial categories of the West. Courtesy of the author.	108
3.5	Franz Boas, one of the founders of modern anthropology, posing for a museum exhibit around 1895. © National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution.	52	6.4	Human faces of many races. © Ben van den Bussche.	109
3.6	Claude Lévi-Strauss integrated anthropology, psychology, and linguistics in his work. © Sophie Bassouls/Sygma/Corbis.	57	6.5	Racial divisions, racial tensions, and racial violence were high during the apartheid era of South Africa. © David Turnley/Corbis.	117
4.1	Linguistic anthropologists began collecting language in the field in the late 1800s. © National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution.	62	7.1	Koya hunter from central India. © Sathya Mohan.	126
4.2	The courtroom is a typical site for the use of linguistic performatives. © Paul Sakuma/Pool/Reuters/Corbis.	70	7.2	Tuareg pastoralist with his camels, North Africa. © Alberto Arzoz/Axiom Photographic Agency.	128
4.3	Masterful use of political speaking is a path to power in many societies, as for American President Barack Obama. Courtesy of www.whitehouse.gov .	72	7.3	Slash-and-burn is a common technique of horticulture. © Jacques Jangoux/Alamy.	130
4.4	Herbert Jim, a contemporary Seminole (Native American storyteller). © Josh Mullenite (jmullenite@gmail.com).	73	7.4	Intensive agriculture societies use all available land, as in Nepal where hillsides are cut into terraces. Courtesy of the author.	132
4.5	Body language and personal space: Arab men hold hands as a gesture of friendship. Reza/Getty Images.	75	7.5	Modern markets, like this one in downtown Tokyo, can generate great wealth. Courtesy of the author.	136
5.1	Enculturation: Warlpiri elder men showing boys sacred knowledge and skills. Courtesy of the author.	82	7.6	Meat and other goods produced in conformity to Islamic religious norms of consumption are classified and sold as <i>halal</i> . © Gregory Wrona/Alamy.	143
5.2	Margaret Mead studied enculturation and the acquisition of gender roles in Samoan children. © Bettmann/Corbis.	87	8.1	Two mothers and their children from the Samantha tribe, India. © Sathya Mohan.	148
5.3	Muslim women in “purdah” or veil. © Hélène David-Cuny.	92	8.2	A traditional wedding ceremony on the island of Vanuatu. © Imagesud (www.south-images.com).	151
5.4	In many societies, men must endure tests and ordeals to achieve adult masculinity. © Kazuyoshi Nomachi/Corbis.	94	8.3	Great amounts of wealth may be displayed and transferred in dowry or bridewealth. © Ami Vitale/Alamy.	154
5.5	<i>Hijras</i> in India often sing and dance at weddings and childbirths. © Philip Baird/ www.anthroarcheart.org .	96	8.4	Individuals belong to their mother’s kinship group in matrilineal societies. © Jacques Langevin/Sygma/Corbis.	158
6.1	Western tourists in Africa inevitably take their preconceptions with them. © Keith Levit*/Design Pics/Corbis.	101	8.5	At age fifteen, a Mexican girl would traditionally celebrate her <i>quinceanera</i> , at which she is introduced to adult society. © Victoria Adame.	161
6.2	Anthropometry—measuring racialized bodies. Adoc-photos/Art Resource, NY.	106	8.6	Members of the <i>morán</i> or warrior age set among the Samburu of Kenya. © Barry Kass.	163

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>9.1 A Haitian woman talks with an employee from an organization set up to help transform waste into resources. Courtesy of Thinkstock by Getty Images. 170</p> <p>9.2 Power is not only situated in governments, but in many informal sites in society. © Peter Marshall/Demotix/Corbis. 172</p> <p>9.3 In many societies, religious specialists like this <i>mara'acame</i> of the Huichol Indians provide political leadership. © Adrian Mealand. 180</p> <p>9.4 The king or Asantehene of the Ashanti Kingdom (present-day Ghana). © National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution. 181</p> <p>9.5 State-level political systems, like the German one headed by Chancellor Angela Merkel combine power and pageantry to control large, complex, and wealthy societies. © Wolfgang Kumm/dpa/Corbis. 182</p> <p>9.6 A complex web of non-governmental organizations provides much of the governmental structure of the modern world. © Tommy Trenchard/Demotix/Corbis. 187</p> <p>10.1 Preacher at a Pentecostal church in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Courtesy of Randy Olson/National Geographic/Getty Images. 192</p> <p>10.2 Religions convey belief and meaning in symbols, like this golden Buddha in Thailand. Courtesy of the author. 194</p> <p>10.3 Ganakwe bushman dancing into a trance. © David Turnley/Corbis. 201</p> <p>10.4 Shamanism is a common religious idea and practice across cultures. © Lindsay Hebbard/Corbis. 202</p> <p>10.5 Warlpiri women lead girls in a dance ritual. Courtesy of the author. 206</p> <p>10.6 A sacred site: the inside of a spirit-house in Papua New Guinea. Courtesy of the author. 210</p> <p>11.1 Buddhists praying and taking collections for earthquake victims in Kyoto, Japan. Courtesy of Thinkstock via Getty Images. 216</p> | <p>11.2 Halloween in the United States is an invented tradition combining very old and general harvest and spirit practices with newer and uniquely American elements. © Erik Freeland/Corbis SABA. 218</p> <p>11.3 Foragers are often forced to settle down, as in these concrete houses built for the formerly nomadic Warlpiri. Courtesy of the author. 225</p> <p>11.4 Native American children were often acculturated through the use of boarding schools, like the Carlisle School. © National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution. 227</p> <p>11.5 A newspaper image protesting political oppression in Mongolia. The main text reads “Don’t forget . . . This repression shouldn’t be repeated.” © Chris Kaplonski. 229</p> <p>11.6 Inculturation is a common way for religions to find a place in a new society. © Frans Lanting/Corbis. 231</p> <p>12.1 The proclamation of the independent “Republic of Hawaii,” with American missionary Sanford Dole as president, after the overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy. AKG Images. 234</p> <p>12.2 Indirect rule involved creating partnerships between European colonizers and local people, including recruitment of native soldiers into colonial armies, as depicted here in Rwanda. © AKG Images/Alamy. 236</p> <p>12.3 Colonialism was a political and personal relationship between colonizers—like the British officer depicted here in colonial India—and colonized. Courtesy of Godoirum Bassanensis (digitization and enhancement). 240</p> <p>12.4 Colonialism typically involved the military defeat and conquest of native peoples, like these Apache women held captive by American soldiers. © National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution. 242</p> <p>12.5 Well into the twentieth century, Australian Aboriginals were often</p> |
|--|---|

- arrested and chained. Sourced from the collections of the State Library of Western Australia and reproduced with the permission of the Library Board of Western Australia. 303666PD. 246
- 13.1 Colonized people often used force to end the occupation of their land, as in the Algerian War where Algerians sought independence from France (1954–1962). © Manuel Litran/Corbis. 257
- 13.2 During the 1994 genocide, Ugandan fishermen found themselves pulling dozens of bodies out of Lake Victoria. The badly decomposed bodies had traveled hundreds of miles by river from Rwanda. © David Blumenkrantz. 261
- 13.3 A mural in Ulster, Northern Ireland depicting the “struggle” of loyalists against Irish Catholic nationalists. © Martin Melaugh/CAIN (cain.ulster.ac.uk). 262
- 13.4 Independence supporters on the streets of Barcelona during the National Day of Catalonia. Courtesy of Thinkstock via Getty Images. 263
- 13.5 A refugee camp in Somalia, east Africa. © Refugees International. 268
- 13.6 An undocumented immigrant is apprehended in Arizona near the Mexican border. Courtesy of Scott Olson/Thinkstock by Getty Images. 271
- 14.1 China’s cities, including Beijing (pictured), face serious air pollution with the development of industry. Courtesy of Thinkstock via Getty Images. 275
- 14.2 Many of the world’s poor live in squalid conditions, like this crowded *favela* or slum in Brazil. Courtesy of Thinkstock via Getty Images. 277
- 14.3 The gleaming modern headquarters of the World Bank, one of the leading institutions of global development. © Uschools University Images/iStockphoto. 285
- 14.4 This Gunjari village in India was submerged because of a dam project. © Narmada Bachao Andolan/www.internationalrivers.org. 288
- 14.5 Indian women attending a presentation on microfinancing. © Kari Hammett-Caster for Unitus: unituslabs.org. 290
- 14.6 Neoliberalism often exposes people to the impersonal forces of global markets. Here a woman and her daughter from the Nigerian delta stand in oily deposits resultant from a Shell oil spill. © Adrian Arbib/Corbis. 291
- 15.1 Hard Rock Café, owned by the Seminole Tribe. Courtesy of Daniel Acker/Bloomberg via Getty Images. 296
- 15.2 Many indigenous societies are in danger of extinction, like the Akuntsu of South America, who are down to their last six survivors. Their numbers continue to decline. © Fiona Watson/Survival International. 298
- 15.3 Indigenous Aymara of Bolivia marching in 2006 in support of new president Evo Morales. © Imagesud (www.southimages.com). 299
- 15.4 Pacific Islanders adopted aspects of Western culture—including marching in formation with mock rifles—in their cargo cults. © 2012 Sami Sarkis and World of Stock. 301
- 15.5 Cultural tourists strolling through Aztec ruins in central Mexico. Courtesy of the author. 309
- 15.6 The pow wow is a popular intertribal event. © Paul Figdor. 311
- 16.1 A star Liberian footballer visits former child soldiers at a care center as part of a UN campaign. The focus is on reintegrating children who have been traumatized by their war experiences. Courtesy of AFP/Getty Images. 317
- 16.2 Yebichai, giving the medicine: Navajo shaman with participant. Courtesy of the Edward S. Curtis Collection, Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division. 321
- 16.3 Waiting room at a Japanese clinic. Courtesy of Gary Conner/Getty Images. 326
- 16.4 Cultures differ in their notions of, and treatment of, mental illness. © Jerry Cooke/Science Photo Library. 330

- 16.5 A yoga class geared toward cancer patients in the United States. Courtesy of Justin Sullivan/Thinkstock by Getty Images. 334

MAPS

- 0.1 Major societies mentioned in the text xxii
 8.1 Youth (age fifteen to twenty-four) as percentage of national population (source: USAID 2012: 5) 165
 12.1 Colonial Africa 245
 13.1 The ethnic groups of northern Sudan and southern Sudan (source: Dr M. Izady/gulf2000.columbia.edu) 254
 13.2 African diaspora/slave routes 267
 15.1 Sri Lanka and “Tamil Eelam” 303

FIGURES

- 2.1 Ralph Linton’s modes of cultural distribution 24
 2.2 A model of cultural integration 26
 4.1 International phonetic chart 65
 5.1 The relation between culture and personality (based on Kardiner, 1945) 88
 7.1 A timeline of production systems 127
 8.1 Kinship notation 156
 8.2 Kinship abbreviations 157
 8.3 A generic kinship chart 159
 9.1 Sanctions: formal and informal, positive and negative 172
 9.2 Political systems by level of political integration (following Service 1962) 177
 11.1 The Cherokee syllabary 222
 12.1 A hypothetical colonial boundary, in relation to societies within 249
 14.1 Global and regional poverty rate estimates for 1990, 2011, and 2030 (source: World Bank 2015: 3). 278

TABLES

- 12.1 Dates of independence from colonialism, selected countries 244
 13.1 Most fragile and most stable states, 2014 (source: Fragile States Index) 266
 14.1 GNP per capita 2013, in dollars (source: World Bank) 278

- 14.2 Infant mortality (per 1,000 births), 2014 estimated (source: CIA World Factbook) 279
 14.3 Life expectancy, in years, 2014 estimated (source: CIA World Factbook) 279
 14.4 Most and least livable states, Human Development Index 2013 280
 15.1 Indigenous peoples by select country (source: Mikkelsen, 2014) 297

BOXES

- 1.1 Mummies, materiality, and meaning 5
 1.2 Urban anthropology 7
 1.3 Anthropology in a global health crisis 16
 1.4 Contemporary cultural controversies: biting the hand that funds you 17
 2.1 Living without culture—the “Wild Boy of Aveyron” 23
 2.2 Animals, persons, and moral substances among the Muinane 29
 2.3 Primate culture 30
 2.4 The discovery of Ardi 33
 2.5 Doing participant observation in virtual societies 38
 2.6 Contemporary cultural controversies: the virtues of “diversity training” 40
 3.1 Utopias—an early form of anthropological imagination 46
 3.2 The unsung women of early anthropology 50
 3.3 A forgotten hero of early anthropology: W. H. R. Rivers 54
 3.4 Anthropology in China 59
 3.5 Contemporary cultural controversies: the future of anthropology 59
 4.1 How to do things with words the Limba way 71
 4.2 Gestures across cultures 75
 4.3 Classical and vernacular Arabic 76
 4.4 Contemporary cultural controversies: the politics of language in the U.S. 78
 5.1 Knowing others’ minds in the Pacific 85
 5.2 The fluid gender cosmos of the Navajo 90
 5.3 Sex and the businessman in contemporary China 94

5.4	The construction of competing male transgenders on Tahiti	97	11.1	The (re)invention of a national tradition: the Scottish smallpipes	219
5.5	Contemporary cultural controversies: do Muslim women need saving?	98	11.2	The invention of Cherokee writing	222
6.1	Race, class, and Otherness in Peru	104	11.3	Stone versus steel axes in an Aboriginal society	224
6.2	The politics of racially correct dolls	107	11.4	Acculturating the “internal Other”: changing peasants into citizens in contemporary China	227
6.3	Who is an Uzbek?	112	11.5	Contemporary cultural controversies: inculturation and religious change	231
6.4	The Betawi, the authentic people of Java?	114	12.1	Germany, colonialism, and “inner colonization”	239
6.5	Deafworld: the culture of the deaf	117	12.2	Managing the colonial forest in Nigeria	247
6.6	Contemporary cultural controversies: the expulsion of black Cherokees	118	12.3	The plural society of colonial—and contemporary—Mauritius	249
7.1	The morality of markets in West Africa	136	12.4	Contemporary cultural controversies: is anthropology colonialism?	251
7.2	The informal economy in the global economy: Mexican beach vendors	140	13.1	Nationhood and suffering in contemporary Croatia	259
7.3	Real people and fake brands: clothing between Turkey and Romania	144	13.2	Transitional justice in Guatemala	264
7.4	Contemporary cultural controversies: studying consumption or manipulating consumption?	144	13.3	A culture of mobility in the China/Burma borderland	271
8.1	Married for a day . . . or an hour: temporary marriage in Iran	149	13.4	Contemporary cultural controversies: Bedouin refugees in Israel	272
8.2	The politics of marriage among the Kalasha	152	14.1	Appraising development: a role for anthropologists	284
8.3	What to do with young people? The youth bulge in Tajikistan	165	14.2	Local self-development in Egypt	286
8.4	Contemporary cultural controversies: the sexual benefit of friendship	167	14.3	Precarity in the American automobile industry	292
9.1	Seeing power and being power: news media in remote Argentina	176	14.4	Contemporary cultural controversies: is “fair trade” freer than free trade?	293
9.2	The life of policy within and across states	183	15.1	Blending old and new in Yali’s cult	301
9.3	Being the state—and resisting the state—in the Republic of Georgia	185	15.2	Korean modernism against Japanese colonialism	305
9.4	Audit culture in contemporary China	187	15.3	“Abyssinian fundamentalism” and ethnic conflict in Ethiopia	306
9.5	Contemporary cultural controversies: anthropology of war versus anthropology in war	189	15.4	Contemporary cultural controversies: indigenous sovereignty	314
10.1	The Glastonbury Goddess	195	16.1	Health, holism, and the knowing body among the Cashinahua	324
10.2	Religion, nationalism, and violence in Eastern European paganism	197	16.2	Life in the ward in Bangladesh	327
10.3	The division of religious labor in a Nepali funeral	204	16.3	Among the schizophrenics in Japan	331
10.4	Contemporary cultural controversies: is Islam inherently violent?	211	16.4	Contemporary cultural controversies: Obamacare	334

Introduction

Are the Chinese happy? China's economic growth has been spectacular and world-altering, but it has also left income inequality, unemployment, population upheaval, and destruction of entire neighborhoods in its wake. No wonder "there are low levels of self-reported happiness" (Yang, 2013: 295) in the country. *Xiangpi ren* (literally "rubber people") has become a popular term for the common syndrome of "numbness, hopelessness, loss of passion in life" (299) experienced by overworked and underpaid Chinese. However, as in many parts of the contemporary world, the official message is that workers' problems are their own doing, a consequence of bad attitude and lack of adaptability rather than of structural abuses. Consistent with global neoliberalism, China has engaged in individualization and "psychologization" of social ills, encouraging citizens to practice happiness as they cultivate their individual "potential"—even if this is *wei xingfu*, "false/fake happiness" (293). One of the key vehicles for spreading the message of (fake) happiness is television, specifically televised "counseling programs" (292) like *The Secrets of My Happiness*, which "celebrates individuals from all walks of life—but especially disadvantaged citizens—by demonstrating how their optimism and happiness helped them realize their potential and achieve success" (293). Not all Chinese viewers are seduced by the rhetoric of happiness, and Jie Yang argues that the government intentionally promotes happiness as a distraction from the social and political injustices of a rapidly changing society

and as an obstacle to collective political action that would threaten the state and its ruling party.

A century ago, during its infancy, cultural anthropology might have been described as the study of "traditional" or "primitive" societies, and some observers may still imagine it as such. However, as it has matured—and as the world that it studies has transformed—it has become a much more relevant and exciting investigation into the cultural processes that construct and conjoin modern societies and the modern global system, of which those traditional or primitive societies have become part. People still live local lives, in their particular places and times, but they are increasingly influenced and interlinked by global forces.

Cultural anthropology is the science of contemporary human behavioral diversity. It puts "culture" or learned and shared ways of thinking, feeling, and acting at the center of analysis, but it maintains a "biocultural" perspective, in which bodies, the surrounding environment, and even physical objects are integral to social life. It takes "change" or dynamism as seriously as "tradition" or the past, and it reveals the lived experiences of people, often obscured or distorted by official accounts and policies. Finally, culture no longer stays within the confines of a specific society—if it ever did—but rather flows and circulates and fuses into infinite new combinations. The case of Chinese happiness exemplifies many of the interests of present-day cultural anthropology—culture change, industrial work, state policies, and popular

culture. It is to introduce and celebrate the achievements of cultural anthropology, and to indicate the contributions that it can and will make to our understanding of contemporary and future cultural circumstances, that this book was written.

PHILOSOPHY AND HISTORY OF THE BOOK

I have taught cultural anthropology for over twenty years, yet I was frustrated from the very start of my teaching career with the organization of most courses and texts on the topic. All of them naturally include a discussion of the concept of culture and its major components, like language and gender and personality. All of them present an analysis of the important areas of culture—economics, politics, kinship, and religion. However, typically they offer at most a couple of concluding chapters on “culture change” and “the modern world” as if these matters are tangential, almost anathema, to anthropology and barely within its purview. This is simply not true: Movement is an inherent part of culture, and the modern world is the most critical subject for all of us, since it is the world that we, modern nation-state populations and indigenous peoples alike, inhabit.

So, I found teaching a course with thirteen weeks dedicated to the basics of cultural anthropology and a couple of weeks devoted to “the modern world” to be akin to spending thirteen weeks learning the grammar and vocabulary of a foreign language and only two weeks actually speaking (that is, *applying* or *using*) the language. That is inadequate. If cultural anthropology cannot be applied usefully to contemporary life, then it is fatally flawed. Fortunately, it can be and has been. Of course, in the days before the internet, it was more difficult to provide students with information that was not already integrated into textbooks. It was possible, although costly, to photocopy materials for distribution; often, as a teacher I was compelled to talk about topics for which the students had no readings in hand.

In response, I created my own addendum to formally published books, covering crucial issues like colonialism, nationalism and ethnic conflict, economic development and global poverty, indigenous peoples, and cultural movements. That

addendum evolved into the third section of this book, which was composed first. Subsequently, I realized that I had a worthwhile perspective on the entire discipline of cultural anthropology, one that would allow me to craft a complete textbook embodying the same principles as I had established in the final section. The result is the book you are holding in your hands.

COVERAGE OF THE BOOK

There are many fine and venerable textbooks, and some innovative new ones, on cultural anthropology. The world does not need another one unless it has something new to offer. The student and instructor, and anyone interested in the discipline, will find that this book covers more topics more deeply than rival texts and in so doing immerses the reader in the worldview, the history, the literature, and the controversies of cultural anthropology like no other.

Certainly, the present book includes all of the standard and necessary topics of a cultural anthropology text, as mentioned above. Even these are presented in novel and usefully organized ways. However, it also provides original and nuanced coverage of a number of topics that are customarily given insufficient attention or no attention at all, such as:


- a sophisticated and subtle discussion of cultural relativism
- an integrated analysis of the biological and evolutionary basis of culture
- a meaningful description of the emergence of anthropology out of Western intellectual traditions
- details on culturally relevant genres of language behavior, such as political speech, jokes and riddles, and religious language, based on the notion that language is social action
- a refined discussion and critique of the race concept
- the presentation of gender not only in relation to women, but also to the construction of maleness and of alternate genders across cultures
- the inclusion of consumption as part of the anthropology of economics
- the integration of kinship-based groups into a more general analysis of social group formation
- a contribution to an anthropology of war


- a cutting-edge description of the composite nature of religions, set within the question of social legitimation
- extended discussion of colonialism and post-colonialism
- serious presentations on nationalism, ethnicity, and other forms of identity politics
- major attention to development policies and practices and the role anthropology has played and can play in them
- the recognition and inclusion of indigenous sources and voices
- a balanced analysis of possible futures of culture based on integrative and disintegrative processes
- inclusion of state-of-the-art anthropological concepts including globalization and glocalization, multi-sited ethnography, world anthropologies, microfinancing, diaspora, cultural tourism, popular culture, and multiple modernities
- extensive intra-textual references, so that readers may find links between subjects discussed in more than one chapter
- three in-depth case-study discussions, entitled “Seeing culture as a whole,” distributed evenly through the text (one-third, two-thirds, and end point) to summarize and integrate the preceding chapters
- a glossary
- an unusually thorough bibliography
- a bonus online chapter on the anthropology of art


GUIDE TO MARGINS


The margins contain:

- Definitions of key terms
- Cross-references to other chapters
- Key texts
- Key film resources
- Key websites

The  icon refers to an audio introduction by the author available on the companion website for each chapter.

The  icon refers to supplementary reading available on the companion website.

The  icon refers to further resources curated by the author on the companion website.

The  icon refers to multiple choice and fill-in-the-blank questions available on the companion website.

FEATURES OF THE BOOK

The present book offers a number of features, within specific chapters and across the structure of the entire book, which enhance the readability and the utility of the text. Each chapter, for example, includes:

- an opening vignette
- at least three boxed ethnographic case-studies to pursue issues in more depth
- a closing “Contemporary cultural controversy” box to spark analysis and debate
- a brief but meaningful summary
- a list of key terms
- notes in the margins of pages, providing definitions, intra-text references, resources (books, videos, etc.) for further research, and references to the companion website

In addition to chapter-specific features, the overall construction of the book includes:

- colorful and relevant illustrations
- organization into three sections of equal length, with one-third dedicated explicitly to contemporary cultural processes
- Bonus chapter on art
- Supplementary readings
- PowerPoint slides

COMPANION WEBSITE

The book is supported by a rich and dynamic companion website, with resources for student and instructor alike, including three or more supplementary original readings per chapter, providing significant and extensive additional material. See: www.routledge.com/eller.

Features include:

- Study guides
- Audio guides
- Testbank (multiple choice and fill in the blanks)
- Questions for review/discussion
- Glossary flashcards
- Links to useful websites and video material

CHANGES TO THE THIRD EDITION

The third edition is a significant modification and update of the second edition, which itself was a substantial modification of the original text. In addition to the features retained from the second edition, the new edition includes the following expanded or enhanced features:

- new opening vignettes for almost all of the chapters
- new closing “Contemporary cultural controversy” cases for the majority of chapters
- a new topical theme—China—with nine boxed case studies on China, one “Seeing Culture as a Whole” case, and numerous other references across chapters
- new boxed case studies—almost all of them ethnographic—for all of the chapters, evenly distributed across the world’s geographic areas and as recent as 2015, featuring examples like anthropology in the global Ebola crisis, important women in early anthropology, Mexican beach vendors, Iranian temporary marriage, international journalists, Pentecostal television, forest conservation, the U.S. automobile industry, and surgical training, to name a few
- extensive revisions to chapters 3 (Origins of Cultural Anthropology), 7 (Economics), 9 (Politics), 12 (Colonialism), 13 (Postcolonial politics), and 14 (Post-colonial economics)
- condensed discussion of pre-modern economic, political, and religious systems to allow more space for contemporary topics like the corporation, work, and the informal economy; citizenship and policy; and Christianity, Islam, paganism, and cognitive-evolutionary theory of religion, among others (much of the previous materials on pre-modern systems has been retained as supplemental readings on the companion website)
- extended or brand new discussions of enskilment, materiality, consumption, age and youth, friendship, colonialism and governmentality, borderlands and illegality, and the precarity of work under new regimes of accumulation
- two new “Seeing culture as a whole” extended case studies, on Western “transnationals” living in China and on Boko Haram and Islamic violence in Nigeria
- an entire new chapter on medical anthropology
- more supplemental readings on the companion website (at least three per chapter) more tightly integrated with the textbook

My hope is that this textbook, the fruit of two decades of my teaching experience and more than a century of the experiences of cultural anthropologists, will communicate the relevance, urgency, and excitement of cultural anthropology that I feel and that I try to convey to my students. Culture matters, and there is no more pressing task for professional anthropologists and for the educated public than to realize that most if not all of the present problems and challenges facing humanity are cultural at heart—related to how we identify ourselves, how we organize ourselves, and how we interact as members of distinct human communities. Cultural anthropology has made significant contributions to these questions, and it is my heart-felt hope that this book will help future anthropologists and world citizens make even more significant contributions.

This page intentionally left blank



MAP 0.1 Major societies mentioned in the text



This page intentionally left blank

Understanding anthropology

1

- 2 THE SCIENCE(S) OF ANTHROPOLOGY
- 6 TRADITIONAL ANTHROPOLOGY AND BEYOND
- 9 THE “ANTHROPOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE”
- 14 PRACTICING ANTHROPOLOGY
- 18 SUMMARY

Why do we gather customs all the world over? Because science is comparative; it has to be, for the reason that one case is never sufficient to serve as the basis for theory; no more is a large number of cases all identical. It is only in variation that we can observe under what conditions certain phenomena appear, and under what conditions they do not appear.

(Hocart, 1936: 580)

In 2001, fifty-two years after Mao Zedong’s communist revolution, China unveiled a new national garment, the *tangzhuang*. The occasion was the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Summit in Shanghai, a testament to the economic and fashion advances of China since Deng Xiaoping announced a change of course in 1978 from the former Communist Party planned economy to a path of “modernization,” essentially (and apparently contradictorily) Communist Party-sponsored capitalism. As customary, the heads of state attending the APEC meeting gathered on the final day of the event wearing “clothes presented by the host country that reflect its culture and tradition” (Zhao, 2013: 70), and the *tangzhuang*, a silk jacket, was chosen over several other proposed designs.

Named after the Tang dynasty (618–907 CE), which is recognized as a high point in Chinese culture and closely associated with Chinese-ness, the coat “looked ambiguously traditional” (71) and was described by a Chinese newspaper as expressing “both traditional Chinese flavor and modern ideals” (69). It was, as Jianhua Zhao puts it, “something new that appeared to be old” (73), a mixture of local and Western elements. The same could be said, of course, about the overall Chinese garment industry, which had grown dramatically in previous decades largely to fulfill Western demand for cheap clothes (such as blue jeans and t-shirts), as well as of the entire Chinese economy and society. China has indeed undergone a rapid modernization influenced by the West, but Zhao argues that “the growth of Chinese textile and apparel industries is not a simple modernization process that spread from the West to China” (39). Rather, China modernized and industrialized in a distinctly Chinese way, combining the old and the new in a unique blend symbolized by the *tangzhuang*. Both the designed coat and China’s designed culture have been embraced by its people, although not without concerns about authenticity and not always as the government anticipated. For example, if the government





IMAGE 1.1 *Tangzhuang* in a shop.

intended to create a new national dress, it failed because the *tangzhuang* was a short-term craze that, ironically, settled into “a traditional dress for traditional holidays” (82).

Culture shapes everything that humans do, and a particular culture is conventionally attributed to a particular people and a particular place. Further, culture is often classified as “traditional” or “modern.” However, neither of these assumptions survives the case of the Chinese *tangzhuang* nor of all the other cases of cultural contact, interaction, and borrowing in the contemporary world.

The twenty-first century (by Western time-reckoning; it is the fifteenth century by the Muslim calendar and the fifty-eighth century by the Hebrew calendar) is a complex era of difference and connectedness. The much-discussed processes of “globalization” have linked human communities without eliminating human diversity; in fact, in some ways they have created new kinds of diversity while injecting some elements of commonality. The local and particular still exists, in a system of global relationships, resulting in what some have called “glocalization” (more on this below). But above all else, the conditions of the contemporary world

virtually guarantee that individuals will encounter and deal with others unlike themselves in various and significant ways. This makes awareness and appreciation of human diversity—and one’s own place in that field of diversity—a critical issue. It is for exploring and explaining this diversity that anthropology was conceived.

THE SCIENCE(S) OF ANTHROPOLOGY

Anthropology has been called the science of humanity. That is a vast and noble calling, but a vague one and also not one that immediately distinguishes it from all the other human sciences. Psychology and sociology and history study humans, and even biology and physics can study humans. What makes anthropology different from, and a worthy addition to, these other disciplines?

Anthropology shares one factor with all of the other “social sciences”: They all study human beings acting and interacting. However, all of the other social sciences only study *some kinds* of people or *some kinds of things* that people do. Economics studies economic behavior, political science studies



CALENDARS AND CULTURES

political behavior, etc. And above all, they tend to study the political, economic, or other behaviors of certain kinds of people—“modern,” urban, industrialized, literate, usually “Western” people. But those are not the only people in the world. There are very many people today, and over the ages there has been a vast majority of people, who are not at all like Western people today. Yet they are people too. Why do they live the way they do? In fact, why do we live the way we do? In a word, why are there so many ways to be human? Those are the questions that anthropology asks.

Any science, from anthropology to zoology, is distinguished in three ways—its *questions*, its *perspective*, and its *method*. The questions of a science involve what it wants to know, why it was established in the first place, and what part of reality it is intended to examine. The perspective is its particular and unique way of looking at reality, the “angle” from which it approaches its subject, or the attitude it adopts toward it. Its method is the specific data-gathering activities it practices in order to apply its perspective and to answer its questions.

As a unique science, anthropology has its own distinctive questions, ones that no other science of humanity is already asking or has already answered. Some sciences, like psychology, suggest in their very name what their questions will be: psychology, from the Greek *psyche* meaning “mind” and *logos* meaning “word/study,” declares its interest in the individual, internal and “mental,” aspect of humans and human behavior. Sociology, from the Latin *socius* for “companion/ally/associate,” implies the study of humans in groups. The name anthropology does not speak as clearly, and many readers, and many members of the public, may have little notion of what anthropology is or what anthropologists do. Anthropology is a fairly new word for a fairly new science, asking some fairly new questions. Derived from two Greek roots, *anthropos* for “man/human” and *logos*, anthropology was named and conceived as the study of humanity in both the biological and behavioral sense.

Anthropology’s uniqueness is thankfully not in its name but in the questions it asks, which include:

- How many different ways are there to be human? That is, what is the range of human diversity?

- What are the commonalities across all of these different kinds of humans and human lifeways?
- Why are humans so diverse? What is the source or explanation of human diversity?
- How do the various elements of a particular human lifeway fit together?
- How do human groups and their lifeways interact with each other and change over time?

Given these questions, we can think of anthropology as not just the study of humans but the study of *human diversity*. Further, humans are diverse along two dimensions. The first dimension is the past versus the present; the second dimension is the physical versus the behavioral, our bodies as opposed to the ways we organize ourselves and act. Therefore, the definition of anthropology can be refined or expanded to *the study of the diversity of human bodies and behavior in the past and the present*. We can now see that there are several possible subfields of anthropology, depending on exactly what area of this diversity each focuses on—what specific anthropological questions it seeks to answer. These subdisciplines give anthropology its familiar “four-fields” character.

Physical or biological anthropology

Physical or biological anthropology is the area that specializes in *the diversity of human bodies in the past and present*. It is plain to see that humans differ in their physical appearance: We have different skin colors, different hair colors, different body shapes, different facial forms, etc. What can we hope to learn from it? First and foremost, we learn that *there is more than one way physically to be human*. All of the various human body shapes and facial features are human. Physical anthropologists can also relate those physical traits to the natural environment: Is there a reason why people in some parts of the world, in some climates for instance, have this or that physical characteristic? This is the question of physical adaptation, and it is entirely possible that a group, if it has lived in a particular environment long enough, could develop traits that fit well in that environment. Finally, physical anthropologists can discover things about human migrations, intermarriages, and such phenomena from the distribution of traits like blood type, gene frequency,

Physical anthropology
the study of the diversity of human bodies in the past and present, including physical adaptation, group or “race” characteristics, and human evolution

See Chapter 3

See Chapter 6

Primatology

the study of the physical and behavioral characteristics of the category of species called primates

Archaeology

the study of the diversity of human behavior in the past, based on the traces left behind by past humans or societies

Artifacts

physical objects created by humans, often specifically the “portable” objects like tools, pottery, jewelry, etc. (as opposed to the non-portable ones like buildings and roads, etc.)

Features

in archaeology, the large and non-portable objects or structures created and left by humans, including walls, buildings, roads, canals, and so on

See Chapter 2

Ecofacts

the environmental remains from past human social contexts, including wood, seeds, pollen, animal bones, shells, etc.

and so on. We will return to the question of “race and ethnicity” below.

In addition to the present diversity of human bodies, there is considerable historical diversity as well. The evidence indicates overwhelmingly that humans have not always had the bodies we have today. This evidence is fossils. Anthropologists have found no human bodies quite like ours that are older than a couple of hundred thousand years at most, and even during that time there were other “humans” who looked remarkably different from us. If you saw a Neandertal (who lived between 130,000 and 40,000 years ago) on the street today, you would recognize him or her as human but not exactly “normally” human. As we look further back in time, human-like beings become progressively less human-like while still retaining certain critical human features, like upright walking, a relatively large brain, and a human-like face. How then did we humans come to have the bodies that we have today, and what other forms did our human ancestors take in the past on their way to becoming us? That too is a question for physical anthropology—the question of human evolution. Some scientists even specialize in the physical characteristics of other species that are similar and related to our own, the primates, for which their science is called **primatology**. We will touch on the subject of human evolution later.

Archaeology

One popular image of the anthropologist is a sort of Indiana Jones character, a researcher who digs up pyramids in Egypt or ancient cities in Mexico. In fact, the researchers who conduct this kind of work are archaeologists. From the root *archae* for “beginning,” **archaeology** is the study of the diversity of human behavior in the past. Archaeologists may do their work in the company of physical anthropologists, who examine the actual anatomical remains of past humans. However, the archaeologists do not focus on the bodies, but on the behaviors of those humans. How can they do that, when the people are all dead and their ways of life have vanished? The answer is that they examine the things those humans left behind. Archaeologists divide this evidence roughly into two categories—artifacts and features. **Artifacts** are the more or less portable objects that people made and used; things like pottery, clothing, jewelry, tools and weapons, and the like are considered artifacts. **Features** are the larger, more or less immovable objects like buildings, walls, monuments, canals, roads, farms, and such. To understand more about the environmental setting of these societies and how the humans made use of them, archaeologists also consider **ecofacts** such as plant (wood, seeds, pits, pollen) and animal (bones, shells) remains.



IMAGE 1.2 Archaeologists study the sites of past societies, such as Teotihuacan near Mexico City.

BOX 1.1 MUMMIES, MATERIALITY, AND MEANING

Despite differences in subject-matter and method that have threatened to divorce archaeology from cultural anthropology, the two kindred subdisciplines emerged from a shared commitment to material objects and their collection and display, and cultural anthropology has come once again to value materiality—the expression of culture in physical objects and the role that objects play in social action and meaning. A quintessential archaeological object is the mummy, which blurs the line between person and thing. However, Christina Riggs makes the surprising assertion that Western emphasis on the personhood of the mummy may betray the ancient Egyptians’ own understanding of it as both thing and trans-person. The inclination of nineteenth-century discoverers was to unwrap a mummy to expose the person inside, discarding or destroying its linen wrap. This “scientific” practice failed to grasp that “the wrapping was as important as what was wrapped” (2014: 23), which “offers an entirely different perspective on the ancient Egyptian worldview” (79). Mummification, she contends, was “a fundamental transformation of the human body’s own materiality,” explicitly intended to “make it less human, more divine” (89). Mummification was not about preserving but about *transforming* the person: A human being looked like a statue in the end (and statues too were ritually wrapped and unwrapped), the linen functioning as the body’s “new skin, muscle, and tissue, so that textile and object—or textile and body—became a unity” (140). This new appreciation of the role of linen leads Riggs to explore the cultural processes by which linen was manufactured and used in ancient Egypt, as well as its social and ritual meaning, noting for instance that many temples had in-house linen workshops.

Studying artifacts and features is fascinating, but archaeologists do not study them just to learn about them. They excavate and interpret this evidence to discover the thoughts, the ideas, the feelings, and the social patterns of the people who fashioned them. How did those past people make these things? Why did they make them? How did they use them? What did the objects mean to the makers and users? Archaeologists try to go from the objects themselves to the minds and hearts of the people who lived among those objects long ago. It is a creative, interpretive activity, but the artifacts and features are often the only traces that those people and their ways of lives have bequeathed to us.

Archaeologists do not look exclusively at the ancient past. They can also study the recent past, such as medieval Europe or colonial America. And since modern humans also make and leave remains behind them, archaeologists have found that their methods can be practiced on living societies to learn how contemporary humans exploit and affect their environments. One recent form of this work has been dubbed **garbology**, since it sifts through contemporary trash to discover

what kinds of objects humans produce, consume, and discard today.

Linguistic anthropology

Linguistic anthropology focuses on the diversity of human language in the past and present. Linguistic anthropologists study the similarities and differences between living languages, looking into their grammar, their vocabulary, and their everyday use. This will not only shed light on each language but also on the possible relationships between languages. Are there, for instance, language “families” that are related historically, by migration or intermixing or other processes? Linguistic anthropologists also investigate changes within a language over time. Anyone who has read Shakespeare or even older English literature knows that English has evolved fairly dramatically over recent centuries. All languages undergo similar processes, and linguistic anthropologists analyze the reasons for and the particular directions of this change. They may also attempt to reconstruct “ancestral” languages—

Linguistic anthropology the study of the diversity of human language in the past and present, and its relationship to social groups, practices, and values

Garbology the study of contemporary trash to examine how humans make, consume, and discard material objects in the present

ones that link, say, English to German and both to ancient Greek or Sanskrit—even to the point of reconstructing the very first language.

More essentially, linguistic anthropology attempts to understand language use in relation to social life and social practices. How are values and concepts captured in and expressed by language? How does language structure and communicate social differences, for example of status and rank or age or gender, etc.? Linguistic anthropology has increasingly emphasized the element of “performance” in language, discovering specialized forms for various purposes (for example, speech-making as opposed to story-telling) and the role of language in forming and maintaining social relationships, including power relationships. Language in the anthropological perspective will be the subject of another chapter.

See Chapter 4

Cultural anthropology

Cultural anthropology
the study of the diversity of
human behavior in the
present

Cultural anthropology, also sometimes called (yet different from) social anthropology, is *the study of the diversity of human behavior in the present*. The large majority of anthropologists are cultural or social anthropologists, and they have one tremendous advantage over both physical anthropologists and archaeologists: They have living people to talk to. The goal of cultural anthropology is still to learn about the thoughts, feelings, action, and institutions of people, but now we can ask them, “Why did you do that?” or “How did you make that?” or “What does that mean to you?” Cultural anthropology is the activity that many people associate with *National Geographic* magazine, the Discover Channel, or similar media, where strange-looking (to us) people are portrayed doing exotic or unfamiliar or maybe even shocking (to us) things. Of course, observers can appreciate the sheer spectacle of such people and their behavior, but cultural anthropology is more than the observation and collection of behavioral curiosities. It is about making humans unlike oneself seem less “exotic” and more human—in fact, every bit as human as each of us. It is about getting to the heart and mind of people very different in at least some ways from oneself. But it is also about getting to one’s own heart and mind, since “we” are one of the diverse kinds of human as surely as “they” are. In so doing, cultural

anthropology penetrates to the very nature of humanity. What separates one kind of human from another yet unites us all? What makes one group’s way of life different from another group’s and yet similar and related?

Please remember, as the first lesson in cultural anthropology, that while others may appear strange and incomprehensible, even abnormal, to us, we may appear just as strange, incomprehensible, and abnormal to them.

TRADITIONAL ANTHROPOLOGY AND BEYOND

We have now seen the traditional four subfields of anthropology. However, in important ways, anthropology has outgrown this narrow categorization, if it was ever actually constrained by it. For instance, a number of well-developed subdisciplines have emerged under the general heading of cultural anthropology, including, among others:

- Urban anthropology, or the study of humans in urban settings, the effects of urbanization on previously non-urban societies, and the relationships between cities and their surrounding hinterlands (such as labor migration).
- Medical anthropology, or the study of knowledge systems and practices concerning health and medical treatment cross-culturally.
- Forensic anthropology, or the use of (mainly physical) anthropological knowledge and methods to solve crimes (e.g. identify murder victims, determine time and cause of death, etc.).
- Visual anthropology, or the study of the production, presentation, and use of material or “artistic” media such as painting, body art, clothing designs, and so on. It can include not only the arts that other societies make, but the arts that anthropology employs to study them, such as film and photography.
- Ethnomusicology, or the study of musical forms and their relation to culture.
- Ethnobotany, or the study of knowledge and uses of plants in various cultures.
- Development anthropology, or the study of as well as the practical contribution to how “modern” forces affect and change societies.

BOX 1.2 URBAN ANTHROPOLOGY

Most people associate anthropology with tribal societies in remote villages on some island or in some jungle, and much conventional anthropology has indeed been of the “village study” sort. As recently as 1980, Ulf Hannerz could claim that urban anthropology was little more than a decade old. But anthropology, as the study of human diversity, certainly *can* examine the city as a form of social behavior, and it *must* examine it, because cities have been part of human experience for thousands of years and because urbanization has finally brought the majority of humanity into cities. While sociology entered the city ahead of anthropology (and anthropologists duly acknowledge this), Alan and Josephine Smart found in their 2003 review of urban anthropology that the field had “made important contributions to our understanding of migration, housing, social and spatial organization, informal economies, and other topics” (2003: 267). Anthropology’s explicit interest in urbanization began in colonial Africa, especially the “copperbelt” of Zambia where new cities arose and formerly non-urban people migrated. Anthropologists noticed new organizations and identities forming, such as mutual aid groups, trade unions, nationalist movements, and “supertribes” or what we would today call ethnic groups. However, critics often accused urban anthropology of perpetuating the village focus by examining communities or enclaves within the city—that is, doing anthropology “in the city” but not “of the city.” In more recent years, urban anthropologists have investigated the city as a social system, finding great diversity inside as well as between cities; not all cities are alike, nor are all inhabitants of any particular city alike. They have also studied the links between cities and their non-urban surroundings, as well as between specific cities and the wider and global economic and cultural system.



URBAN ANTHROPOLOGY

This can include attempting to minimize the negative impact of change on traditional societies and even in some cases advocating for the rights and wishes of those societies.

- Feminist anthropology, originally the study of women’s issues and roles across cultures. This subfield has expanded to include gender issues and roles more generally, particularly how gender is defined, practiced, and controlled through language, values, and power.

It is important to understand that anthropology is not and never has been a purely “academic” pursuit, disconnected from the real world. In its pre-modern form it was to be found in the early European colonial encounters with non-Western peoples, providing data and often service in the colonial enterprise, for better or worse. Some of the first anthropologists, like Franz Boas (1858–1942) in his 1928 book, *Anthropology and Modern Life*, were deeply concerned with practical social issues, like racism, nationalism, eugenics, criminology, and education.

And of course, all anthropological findings can be used for real-world policy- and decision-making.

But many anthropologists overtly practice a kind of “applied anthropology” intended to bring the concepts, perspectives, and methods of the science to non-academic initiatives (see discussion of anthropological careers below).

The continuing evolution of cultural anthropology

Who are the subjects of cultural anthropology’s curiosity—what we sometimes call the “anthropological gaze”? The conventional impression (virtually the stereotype) of the science is that it is exclusively concerned with small, “traditional,” even “primitive” groups. Actually, one of the great early anthropologists, A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, defined anthropology as “the study of what are called primitive or backward peoples” (1965: 2). The equally esteemed E. E. Evans-Pritchard asserted that anthropology was the branch of social science, “which chiefly devotes itself to primitive societies” (1962: 11). However, Evans-Pritchard situated the emphasis on remote exotic peoples within the context of anthropology’s greater subject, which

Boas, Franz. 1928. *Anthropology and Modern Life*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.

Radcliffe-Brown, A. R. 1965 [1952]. *Structure and Function in Primitive Society*. New York: The Free Press.

See Chapters 3 and 11–15

Evans-Pritchard, E. E. 1962. *Social Anthropology and Other Essays*. New York: The Free Press.



IMAGE 1.3

Anthropologists study the city as a distinct social system and way of life.

See Chapters 12–15

“embraces all human cultures and societies, including our own” (4).

If you consider the questions posed by anthropology generally and cultural anthropology specifically, you will immediately realize that there is nothing that limits them to any particular kinds of peoples or cultures. Accordingly, as the human world has changed—especially becoming more interconnected, more fluid, more “modernized”—cultural anthropology has changed too, partly because it can and partly because it must. Cultural anthropology was never really exclusively the study of small, isolated, traditional societies, although it did occupy the “savage slot” (Trouillot, 1991), for tactical reasons (because it is easier to analyze compact and unfamiliar cultures) and for the simple reason that no other science did. But anthropology cannot and does not aspire to remain in that slot, if only because there are no more isolated and “primitive” societies and arguably never were.

See Chapters 11–15

The three main phenomena that have forced a reconceptualization of cultural anthropology are colonialism, postcolonial independence and nationalist and indigenous movements, and

modernization and globalization. Colonialism brought far-flung societies within a single political, economic, and cultural sphere, imposing changes and inequalities. Independence, nationalism, and indigenous movements have transformed the sometimes “passive” objects of anthropological scrutiny into active subjects, actors and producers of culture who speak for themselves. Finally, modernization and globalization have threatened and attempted to integrate cultures into a single world system, which is, Thomas Friedman (2005) notwithstanding, anything but “flat,” if only because they are driven from centers of wealth and power and generate uneven outcomes. In the contemporary world, globalization is the most heralded cultural force, regarded as “processes that take place within [groups] but also transcend them, such that attention limited to local processes, identities, and units of analysis yields incomplete understanding of the local” (Kearney, 1995: 548). But the local does not disappear, nor is it bleached of all its distinctive characteristics; rather, in each location and occasion, a distinct combination or manifestation of the local and the global emerges, leading to a

result that some observers have wryly called **glocalization**, linking local or small-scale changes to large-scale or global factors. The message is that even within a global context, cultural realities are local, and therefore cultural anthropology's questions, perspectives, and methods still apply.

In response to “glocal” realities, some anthropologists have taken “big picture” approaches to the world, as in Eric Wolf's (1982) *Europe and the People without History* and the various works of Ernest Gellner (e.g. 1988). Others have explored specialized aspects of human behavior, such as war and conflict (e.g. Eller, 1999, 2005; Fujii, 2009; Schepher-Hughes and Bourgois, 2004), globalization (e.g. Eriksen, 2014; Lewellen, 2002), consumption and shopping (e.g. Counihan and Van Esterick, 2007; Howes, 1996; Miller, 1998), environment and conservation (Guneratne, 2010; Igoe, 2004), homelessness (Finkelstein, 2005), natural disasters (Hoffman and Oliver-Smith, 2002), material culture like denim (Miller and Woodward, 2007, 2011) and lycra (O'Connor, 2011), and even psychedelic trance dance (St. John, 2010).

THE “ANTHROPOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE”

Cultural anthropology is distinct among sciences for the questions it asks, but it also stands out in its approach to or its way of thinking about its subject, that is, its perspective. The **anthropological perspective** has three components. The first is obvious, the second less obvious but fairly uncontroversial, and the third not at all obvious and quite controversial. They are:

1. comparative or cross-cultural study
2. holism
3. cultural relativism

Comparative or cross-cultural study

Cultural anthropology does not look at just one kind of culture, certainly not just the anthropologist's own kind of culture. A **cross-cultural** approach means that anthropologists are curious about human behavior in a wide and inclusive sense, embracing all human ways of being. Anthropologists

are perhaps peculiarly interested in cultures that are *unlike* their own. After all, people already know their own culture pretty well—or think they do. One premise of human sciences is that most people in fact are not as aware of the causes and consequences of their own behavior as they often (or like to) think that they are. This is a reason why sociologist C. Wright Mills (1959) referred to the “sociological imagination”: Researchers must learn to see meanings, rules, relationships, institutions, and such phenomena that are “invisible” to or outside the attention of group members even as those phenomena influence human behavior, individually and collectively. Therefore, one reason why cultural anthropology has insisted on a comparative perspective is that it is often easier to see what is unfamiliar than what is familiar; familiar things tend to be taken for granted or overlooked, whereas the unfamiliar demands attention. Anthropology, if anything, serves to question assumptions and to expose the taken-for-granted.

However, even if anthropologists knew their own culture very well, that would not be sufficient. Anthropologists, like all scientists, cannot use a sample of one to draw conclusions about other cases. Whether it is plants, planets, or people, it is not acceptable to assume that they are all alike. In fact, it is wise to assume exactly the opposite. Anybody who is truly interested in knowing and understanding humans needs a bigger sample than one. We cannot know ourselves, no matter how thoroughly, and claim that we know *humanity*. Actually, in almost every way, Western culture in general or American culture in particular is quite atypical and non-representative. But then, there is no “typical” culture. Since no culture pertains to all humans, or even a majority or close to it, every culture is a minority. *Whatever you do or think or feel, in the human world you are in the minority.*

So it should be apparent why cross-cultural or comparative study is a valuable part of anthropology. The first reason is that the diversity is there. There simply *are* other cultures than one's own. But more, by exposing ourselves to the plethora of human cultures, we can make two important discoveries:

- the commonalities or “universals” that occur across cultures—that is, is there anything that most or all cultures do, that seems to be *necessary* for humans?

Glocalization

a combination of the words “globalization” and “local,” suggests the unique local and situated forms and effects of wide-spread and even global processes

Wolf, Eric. 1982. *Europe and the People without History*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Anthropological perspective

the unique “angle” or point of view of anthropology, consisting of cross-cultural or comparative study, holism, and cultural relativism

Cross-cultural study

the examination of a wide variety of societies when considering any particular cultural question, for purposes of comparison