

Talking about People

THIRD EDITION

Readings in Contemporary Cultural Anthropology



William A. Haviland • Robert J. Gordon • Luis A. Vivanco

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To all the women in our lives

Preface

This anthology is designed as a supplement for introductory cultural anthropology courses. It consists of thirteen chapters with three to five articles each, and each chapter has a short introduction written by the editors that relates the articles to each other and to the topic of the chapter. The chapters themselves are arranged to complement the chapter topics and order found in most introductory texts and courses.

In the third edition, twenty-six articles are new, and we've introduced two new features: "Personal Pathways," to explore how anthropology translates to careers, and "Doing Fieldwork," to explore the dynamics of doing one of anthropology's central activities: fieldwork.

FEATURES AND BENEFITS OF THIS BOOK

Freshness and Originality

Most anthologies reproduce with some regularity "old chestnuts." While we have nothing against the classics, we do feel that it creates the impression that nothing new has happened in anthropology. We want to introduce students to some of the more recent and provocative works of anthropologists (and a few non-anthropologists who have what we consider to be anthropological insights). We want students to read provocative articles, for one of the aims of the introductory course should be to shake up the students' comfortably ethnocentric beliefs about the world in which they live.

Focus on Contemporary Global Concerns

It is no secret that North Americans are surprisingly ignorant about the nature of the "global society" of which they are a part. In an era when North Americans constitute a small minority of the world's people and are increasingly dependent on the rest of the world for vital raw materials, manufactured goods, and markets for those products still made at home, reliable information about other peoples and the ways in which they live has become ever more important for the survival of North Americans themselves. Because anthropology

has always been in the forefront of efforts to learn about other peoples, it has a special role to play in combating the insularity and provincialism that sometimes accompany students to college. Thus, the majority of articles in this anthology focus on common global interests. From William Klausner's examination of the question "Can one really go 'native'?" in Chapter 1 to Harry Cleaver's analysis of the Zapatistas in Chapter 13, the volume highlights global concerns.

At the same time, this anthology seeks to show the exotic in the familiar by suggesting new and provocative ways of looking at the student's own society. We feel this closer examination is an essential way to combat racism and other invidious distinctions that North Americans like to draw between "us" and "them." From articles such as Emily Martin's "Flexible Survivors" in Chapter 4 and James Brain's "The Ugly American Revisited" in Chapter 12, readers will gain fascinating insights into their own culture.

International Authorship

In keeping with the global perspective of this anthology, we include a significant number of articles by authors from outside the United States. Anthropology is not, after all, an exclusive American preserve (and how arrogant we are to call ourselves Americans!). It is an exciting international discipline whose members are not all white middle-class males. We have tried to reflect the profession more closely by increasing the representation of not only foreign (British, Canadian, Colombian, Congolese, Danish, French, Mexican, Nigerian, Philippine, South African) but also female contributors, including a number of nonanthropologists. About 40 percent of the authors come from outside the United States, and 40 percent are female.

"Doing Fieldwork" and "Personal Pathways"

Recognizing the centrality of fieldwork to anthropological knowledge, the third edition includes essays that deal specifically with the nature and dilemmas of fieldwork. These essays, several of which have already been published and several commissioned originally

for this reader, consider the changing status of the field (is it a geographical space? a bounded social community? a process? an event?), the nature of anthropological learning in the field, and ethical issues and dilemmas. Also, in the interest of exploring the different kinds of careers that are possible with anthropological training, the third edition includes a new feature called "Personal Pathways," original essays on how a specific individual became interested in anthropology and what he or she has done with anthropological training. We hope that these articles will demonstrate vividly the variety of career opportunities open to anthropologists beyond the traditional path of academia that many may anticipate, and that they will spark discussion about what anthropologists actually do in their careers. These offerings are not meant to be exhaustive, and we recommend John Omohundro's book *Careers in Anthropology* (Mayfield Publishing Company, 2001) as a great supplement.

Incorporation of Gender Issues

Because anthropology is the study of women as well as men, we have deemed it important that gender issues be well represented by the articles here. Considerations of gender enter into virtually everything that people do, so we chose to spread the material on gender throughout the book. Notable examples of articles that deal with gender are Alma Gottlieb's "The Anthropologist as Mother" in Chapter 4; John Coggeshall's "'Ladies' behind Bars," Gina Buijs's "Female Chiefs and Their Wives," and Micaela di Leonardo's "The Anthropologist's Public-Image Problem" in Chapter 7; Brett Williams's "Why Migrant Women Feed Their Husbands Tamales" and Timothy Egan's "The Persistence of Polygamy" in Chapter 8; Alan Zarembo's "The New Latin Labor" in Chapter 9; Sylvia Rodgers's "Feminine Power at Sea" in Chapter 11; and Faye Ginsburg's "The Anthropology of Abortion Activism" in Chapter 13.

Abundant Student Learning Aids

An annotated table of contents offers students previews of the various articles, and chapter introductions provide some contextual "glue" for the points made by the articles. Brief biographical sketches of the authors of each article enhance the international flavor of the volume and contribute further insights into what anthropology is all about. The references and notes for each article will appeal to the student who wants to know more, and the glossary and map showing the location of peoples and places discussed will

be helpful to all students. Focus questions help the student make the most out of each selection by offering specific questions for reflection and class discussion. Finally, the index and list of articles by topic area contribute further to making this a user-friendly book.

A NOTE ON THE ARTICLES

While many of the articles are reprinted here in their entirety, some have been edited in order to keep the book to a reasonable length. For the most part, the cuts have involved details of methodology so as not to adversely affect either the substance or the spirit of the article.

We have compiled an anthology with authors from many countries to provide a global anthropological perspective. We retained the spellings from the original texts to give students the experience of reading other versions of the English language and learning to distinguish between British and U.S. spellings; we thought this would help students learn something about the frames of reference of the authors. That was our theory, but in practice the book is a bit more complicated than that.

We have included authors, North American and British-style (includes all non-U.S. anthropologists), who were educated all over the world. They wrote for United States publications with editors who liked "North American" spelling and for British-style publications with editors who liked "British" spellings. And finally, they moved from one country to another. As anthropologists, we are a global community who often spell in both styles, switching from one to another without realizing it. To the utter horror of all copyeditors, we leave with you this evidence of our international lives, a bit of linguistic anthropological research on the anthropologists themselves!

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Lots of people have contributed in one way or another to this volume. Those behind the scenes who have made vital contributions include Anita de Laguna Haviland, who, besides riding herd on the editors to meet deadlines, put everything into the computer, caught numerous errors, tracked down a variety of information, and assisted in writing the Instructor's Manual. Rinda Gordon kept one of the editors in line and helped with the Instructor's Manual. Peggy O'Neill-Vivanco offered her own experiences as an undergraduate anthropology major, as well as key moral and technical support for the new junior editor.

The changes in this new edition in part reflect the reactions in Gordon's and Vivanco's introductory an-

thropology courses at the University of Vermont. To the students we have taught through the years (Haviland has been teaching introductory students since 1965, Gordon in the United States since 1979 and before that in Papua New Guinea, and Vivanco at several U.S. universities since the early 1990s), we are grateful for all we have learned about teaching and the kinds of material students find effective.

We'd like to thank the anonymous instructors who returned questionnaires about the first and second editions, as well as the anonymous reviewers for the third edition. Their advice and comments have been most helpful throughout the evolution of this anthology.

Many people at Mayfield Publishing Company and McGraw-Hill have helped bring this project to

fruition. First of all, we are grateful to Jan Beatty, who has kept us posted on user reactions to the first two editions and provided numerous valuable suggestions. We appreciate the interest she has shown in our ideas from the outset and the ideas and advice she has contributed along the way. We are no less grateful to the others at Mayfield and McGraw-Hill who have seen this volume through production, particularly Roger Geissler, Marty Granahan, and Joan Pendleton. Hats off to you all!

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CONCORDANCE WITH MAJOR TEXTBOOKS

Since this reader is often used in conjunction with a cultural anthropology textbook, the table below indicates the correspondence between *Talking about People* and seven major textbooks. The following textbooks are included:

Bodley, John. 2000. *Cultural Anthropology: Tribes, States, and the Global System*, 3rd edition. Mountain View, Calif.: Mayfield.

Ember, Carol, and Melvin Ember. 1999. *Cultural Anthropology*, 9th edition. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.

Haviland, William. 1999. *Cultural Anthropology*, 9th edition. Fort Worth, Tex.: Harcourt Brace.

Kottak, Conrad Phillip. 2000. *Cultural Anthropology*, 8th edition. Boston: McGraw-Hill.

Miller, Barbara. 1999. *Cultural Anthropology*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Schultz, Emily A., and Robert H. Lavenda. 2001. *Cultural Anthropology: A Perspective on the Human Condition*, 5th edition. Mountain View, Calif.: Mayfield.

Scupin, Raymond. 2000. *Cultural Anthropology: A Global Perspective*. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.

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2 Fact versus Fiction: An Ethnographic Paradox Set in the Seychelles 15

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The task of understanding a culture other than one's own is fraught with difficulty; not only are there all sorts of unexpected things to be discovered, but the anthropologist may also be fed all sorts of misinformation. The difficulties are compounded as one tries to write up one's material in a way that will be comprehensible to an audience with a different cultural background without doing violence to ethnographic reality.

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6 Loading the Bases: How Our Tribe Projects Its Own Image into the National Pastime 28

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7 When Does Life Begin? A Cross-Cultural Perspective on the Personhood of Fetuses and Young Children 35

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