



Life Cycles and Lifeways

An Introduction to Cultural Anthropology

W E N D E L L H. O S W A L T



Life Cycles and Lifeways

An Introduction to Cultural Anthropology

Wendell H. Oswalt

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES



Mayfield Publishing Company

Palo Alto, California

Copyright © 1986 by Mayfield Publishing Company

All rights reserved. No portion of this book may be reproduced in any form or by any means without written permission of the publisher.

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 85-061760

International Standard Book Number: 0-87484-678-1

Manufactured in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2

Mayfield Publishing Company
285 Hamilton Avenue
Palo Alto, California 94301

Photographic and art credits appear on a continuation of the copyright page, pp. 455-456.

Sponsoring editor: Janet M. Beatty

Manuscript editor: Lorraine Anderson

Managing editor: Pat Herbst

Production editor: Jan deProsse

Cover and text designer: Al Burkhardt

Cover photo: Robert Holmes

Illustrator: Mary Burkhardt

Photo researcher: Lindsay Kefauver

Production manager: Cathy Willkie

Compositor: Allservice Phototypesetting

Printer and binder: R. R. Donnelley & Sons

*For the next generation, especially
"Bob," Bryan, and Shelly.*

Every age, every culture, every custom and tradition has its own character, its own weakness and its own strength, its beauties and ugliness; accepts certain sufferings as matters of course, puts up patiently with certain evils.

Hermann Hesse
Steppenwolf

■ Preface

Life Cycles and Lifeways is a traditional introductory cultural anthropology text insofar as it presents well-established subject matter about a broad range of basic concepts, yet it is distinct in these significant ways:

- Since every person is born, lives, and dies in a cultural setting, the *stages of the life cycle* provide an apt framework for introducing many concepts, such as bonding, socialization, passage acknowledgments, kinship, and world view. With the individual as the point of departure, students can identify immediately with this material and find their attention captured and interest stimulated.
- *American life*, both historical and contemporary, appears prominently throughout. Above all, I seek to convey to American students a clear sense of themselves in an anthropological perspective. To this end, I have combined American examples with more traditional ones from other cultures.
- The *American emphasis combined with comparisons of other cultures* serves a further purpose. My goal is to expose students to cultural variability and make them more

conscious of the range of personal behavior that is possible within the scope of human living. Throughout the text I strive to indicate *the effect on students* of the actions of their parents, teachers, immediate ancestors, and the distant ancestors of humankind.

- *Ethnographic sketches in the form of brief, in-text notes* illustrate key points and form a “cultural notebook.” Some notes concern contemporary peoples, ourselves included, but most are about five nonindustrial societies: the Siriono of Bolivia, the Netsilik Eskimos of Canada, the Hopi of the American Southwest, the Gusii of Kenya, and the Qemant of Ethiopia. These peoples, who represent different environmental settings and distinct sociocultural adaptations, were chosen so that students could learn, through ethnographic examples, something about other ways of living. The notes about these peoples provide cross-cultural examples throughout the text.
- *Key theoretical approaches*, such as culture and personality, cognitive anthropology, and cultural ecology, are integrated at

appropriate points in the chapters. My purpose is to present this information in context rather than as a catalog of theories.

- *Pertinent modern issues*, such as the nature of family life, the position of minorities, and alcohol abuse figure prominently, with particular emphasis on contemporary America. I have devoted an entire chapter (Chapter 8) to technology and its effect on modern living. My goal is to show that cultural anthropology has current applicability, an important consideration for students today.
- A significant amount of *information comes from studies by nonanthropologists*, especially sociologists and historians, yet in each instance it is presented from an anthropological viewpoint. This broadened scope should demonstrate to students that anthropology in general and cultural anthropology in particular can serve as the major integrative discipline in studies of humankind.

No single theoretical approach is espoused in this book. Having found a specific orientation to be encumbering, I assume a structural-functional, ecological, evolutionary, ethnohistorical, or other viewpoint at various times depending on the material presented. Sometimes I present contemporary American material from an insider's viewpoint to illustrate that students' own views are important despite their subjectivity. By moving from the familiar to the less familiar, I hope that students will be better able to understand and absorb the information when it is presented.

Finally, this book is an expression of my deep concern about the future of cultural anthropology. Anthropologists have both a unique message for undergraduates and the ability to play an important role in their education, yet we often have failed to teach students that anthropology deals with *modern* as well as past living. To "think anthropologically" is

essential to the emerging generation of undergraduates, for their personal future, for the future of their culture, and for the vitality of the world's cultures. Thus I feel a sense of urgency about bringing contemporary anthropology and modern students together. Other introductory cultural texts devote attention to modern life in small increments only; this is not enough to change the course of anthropology nor the students' thoughts about it.

Learning Aids

The book includes several features especially designed to enhance student learning. Quite often I introduce a subject either from a student perspective or with an American example to engage the reader. Each chapter opens with an outline of its contents and closes with a list of its key terms. These terms are italicized in the text and defined in the glossary at the back of the book. At the end of each chapter is a list of readings recommended as a means of pursuing chapter topics. Works cited in the text are referenced by chapter at the close of the book. A world map at the beginning of the book helps students locate the habitats of peoples discussed in the text. The locator maps introducing the cultural notebook entries further help in placing each culture geographically.

Instructional materials for *Life Cycles and Lifeways* comprise a separate Instructor's Manual. Designated by chapter, these include a library problem, field problem, discussion or essay questions, and true-false and multiple choice test questions. In addition, films that would appropriately accompany each chapter are listed with brief annotations and ordering information.

A learning aid designed for me is the questionnaire at the back of the text seeking student responses to the text's format and usefulness. For future revisions it would be helpful, and much appreciated, to have the questionnaire filled out and returned to the publisher.

Acknowledgments

My initial debt is greatest to David P. Boynton, whose years of encouragement kept me writing and rewriting this book. Following Dave's retirement from publishing anthropology books, the enthusiastic support of Franklin C. Graham provided the catalyst for yet another draft. I likewise owe a great debt to those UCLA students enrolled in my introductory cultural anthropology course during the time that I was using drafts of the book as the text. The students' responses to questionnaires about the chapters led to innumerable revisions. Drafts of the manuscript were read by the following reviewers: Kenneth J. Ackerman, University of Delaware; Paul J. Bohannon, University of Southern California; Erve Chambers, University of Maryland; Tom D. Dillehay, University of Kentucky; Frederick C. Gamst, University of Massachusetts, Boston; Ronald S. Himes, San Diego State University; Dianne Kagan, Santa Rosa Junior College; Margarita B. Melville, University of Houston; James Myers, Cal State University, Chico; Gene Ogan, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities; Arnold Strickon, University of Wisconsin—Madison; Michael B. Whiteford, Iowa State University; and D. J. Yakes, Muskegon Community College. I thank each of them for their assessments, especially the corrective criticisms. I

owe a special debt to Erve Chambers and Frederick C. Gamst, who read two drafts and contributed greatly to the book's final form. As the book was written, other colleagues on whom I relied include Carol R. Ember, Melvin Ember, Paul G. Hiebert, Elman S. Miller, Serena Nanda, Philip L. Newman, Conrad Phillip Kottak, Paul V. Kroskrity, and James Sackett. I owe special thanks as well to Nancy Rhan for typing many drafts of the manuscript so well.

I particularly am grateful to the people at Mayfield for their efficiency and dedication. My most profound debt unquestionably is to Janet M. Beatty as the sponsoring editor. Her professional expertise, coupled with her never-ending tact, insight, and persistence, led to a vastly improved manuscript. The original reorganization of the contents by developmental editor David B. Andrews also contributed to a more integrated work. Lorraine Anderson's copyediting created greater clarity throughout the text, and Jean Mann's talents refined the *Instructor's Manual*. The meticulous care of Jan deProse as production editor carried the corrected manuscript through to final form.

My gratitude to everyone else seems shallow compared with that due my wife, Helen Louise Taylor Oswalt. Her patient evaluation of student questionnaires, persistence as a researcher, and insights as a copyeditor never cease to amaze me. Thanks, H. L.

■ Contents

<i>List of Cultural Notebook Entries</i>	xiii	Bonding	50	
<i>Preface</i>	xv	<i>Infancy</i>		53
PROLOGUE		The Nature-Nurture Controversy	54	
<i>Introducing Anthropology</i>	1	Feeding	55	
		Toilet Training	58	
		Psychomotor Development	59	
		Universal Goals	61	
PART ONE		<i>Key Terms</i>		62
■ <i>Life Cycles</i>	33	<i>Recommended Readings</i>		62
CHAPTER 1		CHAPTER 2		
<i>A Life Begins</i>	35	<i>Childhood</i>		63
<i>Conception</i>	36	<i>The Place of Childhood and Children</i>		64
<i>Birth Control</i>	37	<i>Mental Development</i>		65
Abstinence	38	Piaget's Theories	65	
Contraception	38	Cognitive Anthropology	68	
Abortion	38	<i>Social Development</i>		78
Infanticide	39	Sanctions	79	
<i>Pregnancy</i>	41	Caregivers	82	
<i>Coming into the World</i>	42	Status and Role	87	
Birth	42	Play	90	
The Couvade	46	<i>Personality Development</i>		92
Baby and Mother	47	<i>Key Terms</i>		96
Naming	49	<i>Recommended Readings</i>		97

CHAPTER 3

Becoming an Adult

Physical and Cultural Development 98

Adolescence 99

Female-Male Differences 102

Transitions 105

Passage Ceremonies 106

Intensification Ceremonies 110

Formal Education 110

History of American Education 112

Contemporary American Higher Education 115

Sexual Behavior 116

Sexual Deviancy 119

Incest 120

Sex and Marriage 122

Marriage 122

Choice of Partners 124

Residence Patterns 129

American Marriage 129

Key Terms 131

Recommended Readings 131

CHAPTER 4

Adulthood

The Cultural Backdrop 132

Stages of Early Adult Life 133

The Family 134

Typical Family Forms 137

Alternative Family Forms 139

American Family Vitality 143

Identifying Relatives 143

Descent 146

Kinship 152

Breakup of the Family 156

The Middle Years 159

Key Terms 162

Recommended Readings 162

CHAPTER 5

Aging and Death

Aging 163

Attitudes Toward Aging 165

Aging in America 167

The Final Passage 170

Attitudes Toward Death 171

Body Disposal 174

Tie Breaking 176

The Life Cycle and You 181

Key Terms 182

Recommended Readings 182

PART TWO

■ *The Anthropological Perspective* 183

CHAPTER 6

Learning About Peoples 185

Aspects of Culture 185

Nonhuman Cultural Behavior 186

Symbols and Signs 187

Universals in Culture 188

Changes in Cultures 189

Innovation 190

Diffusion 191

Context of Change 191

Fieldwork 193

Preparing for Fieldwork 193

Entering the Field 195

Collecting Information 196

Ethnographic Purpose 197

Units for Study 198

Ethical Considerations 199

Ethnography in Historical Perspective 202

The Vanguard 202

The Pioneers 205

The Professionals 207

Ethnology in Historical Perspective 210

The First Ethnologists 210

Modern Ethnology 211

Using Cultural Data 212

Key Terms 213

Recommended Readings 214

PART THREE

■ Lifeways 215

CHAPTER 7 Communication 217

Nonhuman Communication 218

Human Nonverbal Communication 220

Kinesics 220

Proxemics 222

Human Language Development 223

Characteristics of Communication Systems 223

From Prothominoid to Hominid 225

Structure and System in Language 228

Historical Linguistics 228

Descriptive Linguistics 229

Generative Linguistics 231

Language and Culture 232

American Dialects 236

Key Terms 237

Recommended Readings 237

CHAPTER 8 Technology 238

Using Naturefacts 240

Producing Artifacts 240

Reduction 240

Conjunction 242

Linkage 243

Replication 243

Raw Material Transformation 243

Basic Developments in Technology 243

Wood and Stone Artifacts 244

Harnessing Fire 246

Habitations 246

Clothing 246

Metalworking 247

Clay Products 252

Other Important Transformations 252

Industrialization 252

Rotary Motion 253

Metrology 256

Becoming Modern 257

Innovative Elements 257

The Clock 258

Printing 258

Gunpowder 259

Internal-Combustion Engine 259

Electric and Electronic Communication 261

Trends in Technological Change 264

Key Terms 266

Recommended Readings 266

CHAPTER 9 Socioeconomic Systems 267

Cultural Evolution 268

Socioeconomic Change 269

Foraging 269

Farming 273

Pastoralism 277

Urbanism 280

Social Differences 282

Egalitarian Societies 282

Ranked Societies 283

Stratified Societies 283

Economic Organization 287

Economic Systems 289

Work 290

Property 293

Exchange 296

Subsistence and Life-Style 301

Key Terms 301

Recommended Readings 301

CHAPTER 10 Political Life and Law 303

Politics and Power 304

Political Systems 306

Uncentralized Systems 307

Centralized Systems 313

Warfare 319

Evolution of War 319

War and Societal Complexity 319

War and Sports 321

<i>Law</i>	321	<i>Religion in America</i>	373
Characteristics of Law	321	<i>Key Terms</i>	377
Law and Freedom	324	<i>Recommended Readings</i>	377
<i>Key Terms</i>	326		
<i>Recommended Readings</i>	326		
 CHAPTER 11		 CHAPTER 13	
<i>Population Contacts</i>	327	<i>Expressive Culture</i>	378
<i>The Impact of Population Contacts</i>	328	<i>Leisure and Recreation</i>	379
Acculturation	329	<i>Sports</i>	380
Assimilation	329	<i>The Arts</i>	384
Ethnogenesis	329	Visual Arts	384
Ethnicity	329	Literature	391
Nativism	332	Music	395
<i>American Minorities: Ethnohistorical Sketches</i>	334	Dance	397
American Indians	334	<i>Valuing Expressive Culture</i>	399
Black Americans	337	<i>Key Terms</i>	399
Asian Americans	342	<i>Recommended Readings</i>	400
Mexican Americans	345		
<i>Cultural Pluralism</i>	350	 CHAPTER 14	
<i>Key Terms</i>	351	<i>Anthropology and</i>	
<i>Recommended Readings</i>	351	<i>Contemporary Problems</i>	401
 CHAPTER 12		<i>World Population</i>	403
<i>Religion</i>	352	<i>Food</i>	406
<i>Definition and Origins of Religion</i>	353	<i>Indigenous Peoples</i>	408
<i>The Functions of Religion</i>	358	<i>Alcoholism</i>	412
<i>Practices and Forces</i>	359	<i>Aggression and Violence</i>	415
Ritual	359	<i>International Tensions</i>	418
Taboo	360	<i>The Environment</i>	420
Magic and Luck	360	<i>Anthropology's Potential Contribution</i>	423
Prayer	361	<i>Key Terms</i>	423
Religious Artifacts	361	<i>Recommended Readings</i>	423
Divination	362		
Altered States	363	 EPILOGUE	
<i>Specialists</i>	364	<i>Five Cultures in Change</i>	425
Shamans	364	<i>Glossary</i>	433
Priests	367	<i>Reference List</i>	441
Witches	370	<i>A Bibliography for the Cultural Notebook</i>	453
Sorcerers	371	<i>Index</i>	457
<i>Evolution of Religion</i>	372		

Cultural Notebook Entries

Chapter 1 / A Life Begins

Netsilik Infanticide	40
Siriono Labor and Delivery	45
Conception and Birth Among the Hopi	47
A Qemant Rite for Infants	49
Gusii Infants	56

Chapter 2 / Childhood

Hopi World View	71
Learning Among the Netsilik	80
Qemant Children	83
Gusii Children at Work and Play	92
Siriono Personality	95

Chapter 3 / Becoming an Adult

Menstruation Among the Siriono	180
Initiation of Gusii Girls	107
Hopi Marriage	125

Chapter 4 / Adulthood

Gusii Households	138
Netsilik Families and Kindred	146

Gusii Patrilineal Clans	149
Hopi Matrilineal Clans	150
Siriono Divorce	157

Chapter 5 / Aging and Death

The Aged Among the Siriono	166
Hopi Attitudes Toward Death	174
Gusii Reactions to Death	177
Visions of the Dead Among Hopi Women	178

Chapter 7 / Communication

Siriono Nonverbal Communication	221
The Netsilik Language	232
Hopi Architectural Terms	234
Gusii Proverbs	235

Chapter 8 / Technology

Materials for Siriono Artifacts	242
Netsilik Snowhouses	248

Chapter 9 / Socioeconomic Systems

Netsilik Food Getting	271
Siriono Subsistence Activities	274
Qemant Farming	288
Hopi Land Tenure	294
Gusii Markets	299

Chapter 10 / Political Life and Law

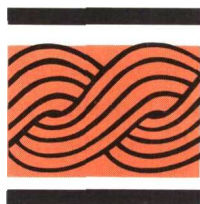
Siriono Political System	311
Hopi Political Leaders	312
Gusii Political System	314
Hopi Warfare	320
Justice Among the Qemant	322

Chapter 12 / Religion

Hopi Religion	355
Gusii Divination	362
Netsilik Religious Specialists	366
Qemant Religion	368

Chapter 13 / Expressive Culture

Gusii Recreation	381
Visual Artistry Among the Netsilik	392
Siriono Origin Myth	394
Netsilik Dance Performance	397
Siriono Music and Dance	398



Introducing Anthropology

- *Introducing Five Cultures*
 - The Siriono
 - The Netsilik
 - The Gusii
 - The Hopi
 - The Qemant
- *Studying Cultures*
- *Major Branches of Anthropology*
 - *Avoiding Ethnocentrism*
 - *Key Terms*

Anthropology is a bold intellectual enterprise based on the conviction that people can view themselves and others with thoughtful objectivity. As the most comprehensive or holistic study of humankind, anthropology concerns all living peoples and their immediate or remote ancestors. The word *anthropology* is derived from the Greek words *anthropos*, meaning man or human, and *logia*, meaning study. Anthropology is the study of humans in all their biological and behavioral diversity; it compiles and coordinates information about peoples as they live today and as they have lived in the past. Human bones and garbage, customs and habits, taboos and gods, fun and folly, law and government, words and gestures represent a small sampling of the subject matter. Since anthropology is exceedingly broad in scope, it is divided into separate disciplines.

Cultural anthropology, the focus of this book, is the study of the different ways in which groups of people live. It embraces the life-styles of all peoples—past, present, and

future. Cultural anthropology is especially meaningful and popular in North America because it helps us to understand ourselves in both our heritage and current mixture of life-styles. Our entire population, except for American Indians and Eskimos, traces its recent ancestry elsewhere. Peoples from more countries have settled here than in any other nation of the world. Puerto Rican, Irish, and Italian sectors of New York City, Chinese enclaves in San Francisco, Mexican-American communities in the Southwest, and Russian neighborhoods in Los Angeles are examples of sizable populations that originated elsewhere. The differences in their life-styles might be obvious or subtly apparent to you as an observer if you were to travel to different sections of this country. What you saw or heard in your travels might strike you as curious, charming, or perhaps offensive, depending not only on what was going on but on the personal background from which you viewed it. Regardless of your viewpoint, the ethnic diversity represented in this country provides a sampling of the scope of cultural anthropology.

Cultural anthropology also encompasses cultures with life-styles dramatically different from our own. Some peoples, in contrast with most contemporary Americans, literally can carry everything they own on their backs, never travel faster than they can run, deal only with relatives and friends throughout their lives, hold all land in common, and know only what they have been told or have learned from experience. Yet peoples everywhere share similarities that are more important than the elements that vary. They all depend on others in their communities, believe in spirit beings, work to fulfill their needs, and enjoy the lighter side of life. As cultural anthropologists have investigated human diversity, they have concluded that all peoples are equally human and capable, no matter how differently they may express themselves or adjust to one another.

Introducing Five Cultures

To begin your study of cultural anthropology, let us consider five cultures representative of lifeways with which you may not be familiar. In the next few pages you will meet the peoples of these cultures through text and photos. Then throughout the book you will encounter these five peoples in notes that are set off from the body of the text and illustrate the particular under discussion. These entries

make up a Cultural Notebook that exemplifies the many different ways in which peoples of the world actually live or have lived.

The five representative cultures are those of the Siriono, the Netsilik, the Gusii, the Hopi, and the Qemant. The habitats of these peoples include tropics, deserts, and the arctic, and their food-getting activities range from hunting to farming and raising herd animals. The smallest group has fewer than a thousand members, and the largest has hundreds of thousands. Social life is focused in different kinds of family units, political organization ranges from small groups or bands to nations, and religious involvement varies from the belief in a host of spirits to the worship of one god. In short, these peoples represent not only different cultures but different levels of cultural complexity. Because the way of life described in the notebook entries usually no longer exists in the manner reported, it seemed preferable to use the past tense in most of the descriptions.

Before introducing these groups, I must define *society* and comment on the general terms applied to these societies and to others around the world. A society is an organized and enduring group of people who cooperate and interact with one another. *Primitive*, meaning primary or original, once was a popular label for peoples among whom writing and reading were unknown, as contrasted with *civilized* peoples, among whom reading and writing prevailed. Many anthropologists have abandoned the word *primitive* because its alternative meanings, naive and simple, do not apply to these peoples. Terms used in this book for peoples previously called primitives include *aboriginal*, *indigenous*, *nonliterate*, and *preliterate*. Likewise, a terminological distinction is made between societies that are *small-scale*, *traditional*, or *preindustrial* and those that are *industrial*.

All bibliographic references to these five peoples can be found in the Bibliography for the Cultural Notebook at the back of the book.



The Siriono

The Siriono Indians in the tropical forests of eastern Bolivia were hungry much of their lives. Two of their most frequent comments were “my stomach is very empty” and “give me something,” which always meant something to eat. Food was shared customarily within one’s immediate family and reluctantly with other relatives or community members. Partly because they had few ways to preserve it, food was obtained largely on a daily basis by men, women, and children. They hunted animals, collected plant products, and raised some crops, yet hunger continuously stalked them. Compared with most other small-scale societies, they had manufactures—such as dwellings, baskets, and tools—that were singularly uncomplicated. They made nothing from horn, stone, or animal skin, and rarely used bone or shell; the materials they used primarily were wood, leaves, and vines. They made no boats, even though much of their jungle homeland was low country subject to flooding for months on end, at

A Siriono chief, his five wives, and his children stand before a communal house made by covering a wooden frame with palm fronds.

