



THE TAPESTRY OF CULTURE

AN INTRODUCTION TO
CULTURAL
ANTHROPOLOGY

EIGHTH EDITION

ABRAHAM ROSMAN · PAULA G. RUBEL

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THE TAPESTRY OF CULTURE: AN INTRODUCTION TO CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

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This book is printed on acid-free paper.

2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 FGR/FGR 0 9 8 7 6 5 4

ISBN 0-07-283025-5

Publisher: *Phillip A. Butcher*
Sponsoring editor: *Kevin Witt*
Developmental editor: *Pamela Gordon*
Senior marketing manager: *Daniel M. Loch*
Media producer: *Shannon Gattens*
Project manager: *Destiny Rynne*
Production supervisor: *Janean A. Utley*
Design manager: *Laurie Entringer*
Lead supplement producer: *Marc Mattson*
Photo research coordinator: *Nora Agbayani*
Art manager: *Robin Mouat*
Photo researcher: *Inge King*
Art director: *Jeanne M. Schreiber*
Cover design: *Oxygen Design*
Interior design: *Laurie Entringer*
Typeface: *10.5/12 Times New Roman*
Compositor: *Carlisle Communications Ltd.*
Printer: *Quebecor World Fairfield Inc.*

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Rosman, Abraham,

The tapestry of culture : an introduction to cultural anthropology / Abraham Rosman and Paula G. Ruble.--8th ed.

p. cm.

ISBN 0-07-283025-5 (softcover : alk. paper)

1. Ethnology. I. Rubel, Paula G. II. Title.

GN316.R67 2004

306--dc21

2003051236

PREFACE



The Story of the Book

The book had its genesis because we both taught introductory anthropology at Barnard College, Columbia University to several generations of undergraduate students of different ages, as well as those senior citizens who participated in the University's Life Long Learner Program. We both had developed a style of teaching by means of which we wanted to communicate the concepts and theories of anthropology succinctly, then have students read ethnographies, which are the heart of anthropology. We found that the textbooks available were too lengthy or inadequate to the task. Furthermore, at Columbia University a tradition existed in which senior faculty wrote their own texts, emphasizing their own theoretical approaches, when they taught introductory anthropology. So we, too, set about writing our introduction to the subject. The first edition of *The Tapestry of Culture* was issued more than 20 years ago. Since that time, the theoretical framework of anthropology has changed greatly, as has our own theoretical perspective, and the successive editions of the book have reflected these changes.

In the past decade, the lives of people scattered over the world have undergone enormous change. At the same time, American anthropology has also changed drastically, responding to scholarly and political influences as well as changing generations. The influence of postmodernism has created a much more contested and fragmented anthropology than that of 30 years ago. However, in our opinion, it is unfair to introduce students to a field of study like anthropology, which is inherently very appealing, by pointing out its disjointed, fragmented character. It would be equally unfair to imply that a single, unified, agreed-upon point of view exists.

Hallmark Features

The Tapestry of Culture adopts a distinctive approach to anthropology, which attempts to accommodate various viewpoints in anthropology today. It examines cultural differences but also seeks to point out cultural similarities that emerge as a result of comparative study. The approach also emphasizes the interpretation of

symbols and the meaning of things. The task of the book is to translate the concepts, ideas, and behavior of other cultures into our culture's terms. Today the trend is to see every ethnography as a description of a unique society, not comparable to any other. However, beyond each society's uniqueness, the presence of cultural similarities is apparent and compelling. From its inception, anthropology has always been comparative, enabling generalizations to be made about human behavior. Formerly, anthropologists generalized about the nature of rules of residence and kinship terminology, but, at present, generalizations may deal, for example, with the nature of ethnic group behavior and the role religion plays in many instances of ethnic conflict. In this edition of *The Tapestry of Culture*, we discuss many different kinds of generalizations.

Postmodernists pay particular attention to the nature of ethnographic texts, and anthropologists today still consider ethnographies, that is, descriptions of unique societies based on field research, the heart of the discipline. One of the best ways for students to be introduced to anthropology is by reading ethnographies so that they can feel the excitement of a first-rate fieldworker engaged in his or her work. Seeing the Trobriand Islands through Bronislaw Malinowski's eyes as he describes them in *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* conveys to the students Malinowski's feeling of being a castaway on a strange shore and his sense of adventure and discovery, in addition to informing them about Trobriand culture, as it was at the turn of the twentieth century. However, students must be provided with the concepts and theories that anthropologists use in order to understand and appreciate such ethnographies and to comprehend the differences between a society like the Trobriands and our own.

Students need a framework for the critical evaluation of ethnographies such as Malinowski's. *The Tapestry of Culture* provides a concise and up-to-date conceptual framework with which to understand not only classic ethnographies but also the ethnographies about complex societies being written today. In teaching introductory anthropology, we ourselves have used studies of groups like the Yanomamo of the South American tropical forest, a small-scale society being forced to adapt to the modern world, as well as those describing aspects of industrialized societies, such as the multiethnic neighborhoods of Philadelphia. *The Tapestry of Culture* is organized so that it can be used with the particular ethnographies that suit the instructor's interests.

The title of our book refers to culture metaphorically as a tapestry, composed of many interconnected threads, in which the whole is more than the sum of its parts. Standing back from the tapestry, one no longer sees the individual threads, but an overall design. The anthropologist does not see "culture," the overall design of the tapestry, while doing fieldwork. Rather, he or she converses with individuals and observes their actions; this is the equivalent of the threads. From this, the anthropologist, collaborating with members of the culture, creates a picture of that culture which results in the ethnography. Therefore, culture is an analytical concept, an abstraction from reality. Like a tapestry, each culture has an overall design, even though we do take it apart and study it, by employing categories such as kin-

ship, economics, and religion, and then examine the interconnections between the parts. However, the fit between the parts, in reality is always far from perfect and there are always disjunctions and contradictions. In today's globally connected world, the disjunctions and contradictions often dominate the picture of a particular culture, including our own.

New to the Eighth Edition

We have passed into a new millennium and are in the twenty-first century. During the past century, the world changed more than it had in the previous 5,000 years. Anthropology, as the study of humans and their ways of life, has the task of understanding the ways in which people bring about changes in their cultures, deal with these changes, and try to understand them. Ethnicity and ethnic identity are crucial issues in the world today. Nation-states and empires have fractured. People of different ethnic groups who lived together in one state and even intermarried are now fiercely at war with one another. Technological advances in many fields have brought about great changes in industrial societies like our own. Automation has made many earlier types of employment obsolete, but not everyone controls the skills to ride the information superhighway. These changes have required the rethinking of the economic organization of modern industrial societies. Technology has even overtaken and transformed human reproduction and required new ways of thinking about motherhood, fatherhood, and parenting. Ideas about gender and gender role are being reformulated, with significant consequences for family organization. Anthropology today has had to come to grips with these various issues, as have we in this eighth edition of *The Tapestry of Culture*.

In the last few years, we have traveled a great deal in distant parts of the globe, which has given us a firsthand look at the momentous changes that are taking place. We have observed how Pushtuns respond to religious fundamentalism in the Swat region of Pakistan. We have watched the way in which many Mongolian families have returned to nomadic pastoralism as their nation detached itself from the former Soviet empire and its industrial collapse. We have seen how globalization affects Burmese (Myanmarese) market towns, where tribal people still maintain their own identities vis-à-vis the majority Burmese. While the technological, economic, and political spheres are undergoing dizzying changes around them, these particular people are clinging to clan and tribal identities.

In this eighth edition, as is our usual practice, we have added a great deal of new material and made discussions and examples in every chapter more current, in accord with present-day thinking in the anthropological literature. In this Preface, we will discuss only the major changes to the text to be found in the eighth edition. Though some issues have been with us since the beginnings of the discipline, contemporary commentators and critics within and outside anthropology have compelled us to confront them anew.

Chapter 1, which deals with the concept of culture, the nature of cultural rules, cultural universals, and contemporary approaches to anthropological theory, has a new section devoted to cooking and its relationship to the evolution of culture. The discovery of fire enabled early hominids to transform raw foods—grasses and tubers—into cooked food, paralleling Lévi-Strauss's discussion of the raw and the cooked. There is a new section in Chapter 3, "Language and Culture," entitled "World Englishes and the Global Spread of English." It describes the way in which English spread as a consequence of colonial expansion, and the later and more recent spread of English as a consequence of globalization and the development of a world market.

Chapter 5 has been retitled as "Symbolic Meanings." We have enlarged the discussion of the relationship between the caste system and food symbolism, including material on the Newar of Nepal. There is a new section entitled "Body Symbolism," which deals with the way in which some societies prefer plumpness in women and other societies, such as our own, prefer women who are thin. The symbolism of organ donation is also considered. "Ties That Connect: Marriage, Family, and Kinship" is the new title of Chapter 6. It includes two new sections. The first, "The Na: A Society without Marriage or Fathers" concerns a matrilineal society in Southwest China, which is under pressure from the Chinese government to conform to the patrilineal descent rules that characterize the Han who are the majority of the Chinese population. The second is entitled, "The Impact of Biological Technologies on Kinship" and deals with the effects of these new technologies and the Human Genome Project on ideas of parenthood and kinship.

Chapter 8 has been retitled, "Production, Distribution, and Consumption: The Economic Organization of Societies." It includes several new sections in the light of the enormous economic changes that have taken place on a global level. It deals with the way in which hunters and gatherers, agriculturalists, and nomadic pastoralists are adapting to these global changes. The new sections are entitled, "How Contemporary Hunters and Gatherers Have Adapted to the Modern World?" "Agriculture in Today's World," "Can Nomadic Pastoralism Be Maintained Today?" "Capitalism and the Market System," and "The Changing Nature of Consumption in Third World Societies." The section, "Barter," now includes a discussion of the increased use of barter in present day Russia, that has replaced, in part, a monetary and banking system that people no longer trust.

We have retitled Chapter 9 as "Politics, Government, Law, and Conflict." The section formerly entitled "Politics in the Contemporary Nation-State" has been broken down into subsections that concern politics in American society, the Mafia, factionalism, empowerment, patron-client relationships, and politics in the post-colonial period. We have included two new sections titled "Warlords" and the "Anthropology of Violence." In Chapter 10, "Religion and the Supernatural," some of the sections have been reworked, and we have added a new section enti-

tled "Cyberspace and Religion: Give Me That Online Religion," which concerns religious practices like the Jewish Seder which have moved "online."

Chapter 11 has been retitled "Myths, Legends, and Folktales: Past, Present and Future." It includes new sections—"The Sopranos: An American Myth," in which this TV program is analyzed to demonstrate America's love affair with the Mafia, and "Legend Becomes History: King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table," which illustrates how archeological and manuscript material has been used to show that King Arthur really existed. New sections have been created on "Fairy Tales," "American Films as Legends and Myths," and "Urban Legends".

Chapters 13 and Chapters 14 have been reorganized and there is a new Chapter 15. Chapter 13 is now entitled "The Colonial and Post-Colonial Worlds: Globalization and the Role Anthropologists Have Played in Directed Cultural Change" and it includes sections on "The Historical Background to Globalization: The Colonial Period," "New Ireland: An Example of Increasing Incorporation into the Global System," and "Applied Anthropology: What Is the Anthropologist's Role in Directed Culture Change?" Chapter 14, entitled "Migration, Diasporas, and Cultural Identity Reasserted" contains sections on "Internal Migration," "Transmigration," "Cultural Identity Reasserted and Transformed," "Revitalization Movements," "Cargo Cults," "Rebuilding Cultural Identity," "Ethnogenesis," and "Ethnonationalism." An entirely new section has also been added, "Blood, Culture and Race," which discusses how the Cherokee have used the concept of blood connection to reassert their cultural identity.

Chapter 15 is entitled "Ethnicity, Ethnic Conflict, Race, and Nationalism: Abroad and at Home." It includes sections on "Nation-Building," "Ethnicity and Nationalism after Communism," "Ethnic Processes in Sri Lanka," "From Melting Pot to Multiculturalism in the United States," "The Mexican-American Transformation in Texas," "Culture Unassimilated, Reiterated, and Renewed in America," "African Americans and Their Heritage," and "Hyphenated Cultures." Several sections of this chapter pick up the theme of violence, which was introduced in Chapter 9, and discuss how ethnicity, race, and religion combine to produce ethnic violence in Chechnya, Georgia, and Sri Lanka. New sections, "Ethnic Differences, Ethnic Violence, and the New Nation of Afghanistan" and "African-Americans on the Sea Islands of Georgia: The Gullah" have also been added. The Epilogue reiterates the central themes of the book.

Important new pedagogical and presentation changes have been introduced in the text content and the design of the eighth edition of *The Tapestry of Culture*. They include new end-of-chapter materials—bulleted summaries, increased number of headings, focus on key terms, suggested readings, and websites related to the chapter. The design of the book is intended to make the book aesthetically more attractive and approachable, to help the student focus his or her attention on key ideas and concepts.

Supplements

As a full-service publisher of quality educational products, McGraw-Hill does much more than just sell textbooks. They create and publish an extensive array of supplements for students and instructors. *The Tapestry of Culture* boasts a comprehensive supplements package. Orders of new (versus used) textbooks help to defray the cost of developing such supplements, which is substantial. Please consult your local McGraw-Hill representative for more information on any of supplements.

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Acknowledgments

This new edition could not have been written without assistance from many people. First of all, we would like to thank the many students in our introductory anthropology classes who, over the years, have asked us many penetrating questions. We have always learned from our students and have been continuously in their debt. We are especially grateful to the professors who have continued to use *The Tapestry of Culture* in their introductory anthropology courses and who have given us their pithy comments and observations. To these individuals and all the others who have helped us in the past, we owe a debt of gratitude for raising questions that have contributed to a significant improvement in the organization and clarity

of this book. We would like to especially thank our friend and fellow anthropologist Aram A. Yengoyan for his thoughtful comments and many suggestions. We must also mention and thank the following reviewers, who offered many valuable comments and suggestions for this eighth edition:

Claire Cesareo Silva, Saddleback College

Margot Nason, Northern Arizona University

Loretta Morris, Loyola Marymount University

Mathea Cremers, University of California, Santa Barbara

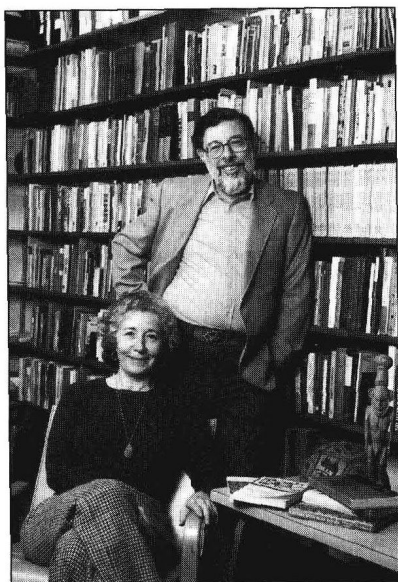
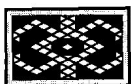
Larry Naylor, University of North Texas

We would also like to thank Pamela Gordon and Kevin Witt for their encouragement and help in producing this edition. Finally, our thanks to Phil Butcher for his continuing support of *The Tapestry of Culture* through several editions.

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Abraham Rosman and Paula Rubel began their collaboration in 1971 when they published *Feasting with Mine Enemy*, a comparative study of the potlatch in six Northwest Coast societies. They have done fieldwork together in Iran, Afghanistan, and Papua New Guinea, and in 1978 they published *Your Own Pigs You May Not Eat: A Comparative Study of New Guinea Societies*. They have also published many articles on their fieldwork and comparative research. Their later fieldwork in New Ireland, Papua New Guinea, and their research on the nineteenth-century collecting of ethnographic artifacts have been the basis for several recent articles. They have just edited a volume, *Translating Cultures: Perspectives on Translation and Anthropology*, and are currently working on a volume on the “collecting passion” in America.

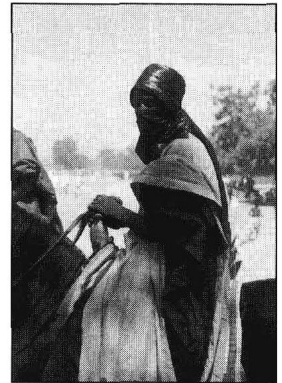
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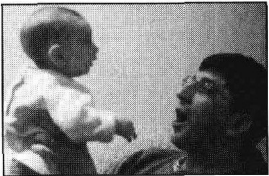
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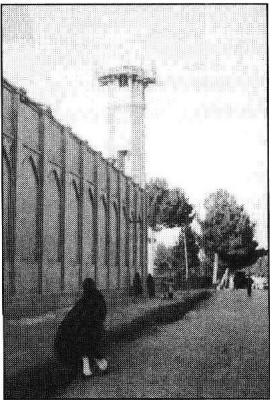
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