

# APPLYING ANTHROPOLOGY

An Introductory Reader

FIFTH EDITION



Aaron Podolefsky • Peter J. Brown

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# Applying Anthropology

An Introductory Reader

Fifth Edition

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Mayfield Publishing Company  
Mountain View, California  
London • Toronto

*For Arthur J. Rubel, my first teacher of  
anthropology, and for my colleagues at  
Emory who have continued to teach me  
more and more over the past twenty years.*

—PJB

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# To the Student

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An introductory course in any discipline is full of new terminology, concepts, and facts. Sometimes students forget that these new ideas and vocabulary are actually intellectual tools that can be put to work for analyzing and solving problems. In preparing this book, we have selected readings that will show you how anthropological concepts, discoveries, and methods can be applied in today's world.

The study of anthropology can help you view the world in a completely different way than you ever have before. You can come to appreciate the great diversity of human cultures and the interrelatedness of economic, sociopolitical, and religious systems. Anthropology can give you a broad perspective on humanity and help you understand other people's beliefs and customs. In doing so, it can help you become a better citizen in an increasingly global society. But your motivation need not be completely altruistic—there are many examples in this book of how cross-cultural awareness can improve performances in business, negotiations, and clinical medicine.

The fascinating side of anthropology seems obvious to most educated people, but there is also a lesser known practical side of the discipline. The readings we have selected demonstrate that practical, applied side. Many of the articles depict anthropological ideas and research methods in action—as they are used to understand and solve practical problems. We have included career profiles of anthropologists working outside the academic setting to show how they are applying anthropology. We believe that the fundamental lessons of anthropology can be applied to many careers and all areas of human endeavor.

To benefit from the study of anthropology, you need to study effectively. Over the years, we have found that students often read assignments without planning, and this actually makes studying less efficient. Before you read a selection, spend a few moments skimming it to get an idea of what it is about, where it is going, and what you should look for. This kind of preliminary reading is a poor idea for mystery

novels but is essential for academic assignments. Without this preparation, the article may become a hodgepodge of facts and figures; details may be meaningless because you have missed the big picture. By planning your reading, you can see how the details are relevant to the central themes of an article.

To help you plan your reading, at the beginning of each article we have included questions and a list of glossary terms. By studying these questions in advance, you may gain an idea of what is to come and why the article is important. This will help make the time you spend reading more fruitful. Most of the questions highlight the central themes of the selection or draw your attention to interesting details. Some of the questions, however, do not have straightforward answers—they are food for thought and topics for discussion.

These articles have been selected with you, the student, in mind. We hope they convey our excitement about the anthropological adventure, and we expect that you will find them both enjoyable and thought-provoking.

If you are interested in reading more about applied anthropology, there are several excellent books available, such as *Applied Anthropology: A Practical Guide*, by Erve Chambers; *Applied Anthropology: An Introduction*, by John van Willigen; *Anthropological Praxis: Translating Knowledge into Action*, by Robert M. Wulff and Shirley J. Fiske; *Applied Anthropology in America*, by Elizabeth M. Eddy and William L. Partridge; and *Making Our Research Useful*, by John van Willigen, Barbara Rylko-Bauer, and Anne McElroy. If you are interested in medical matters, you may want to consult *Understanding and Applying Medical Anthropology*, by Peter J. Brown. You might also want to look at the journals *Human Organization* and *Practicing Anthropology*, both of which are published by the Society for Applied Anthropology. The National Association of Practicing Anthropologists (NAPA) has also published interesting works on specific fields such as medical anthropology.

# To the Instructor

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Introductory anthropology has become an established part of the college curriculum, and through this course our profession communicates with a large and diverse undergraduate audience. Members of that audience differ in experience, academic concentration, and career aspirations. For those students considering anthropology as a major, we need to provide (among other things) a vision of the future, a view of anthropological work to be done in the public domain as well as within academia. For them, we need to provide some answers to the question, What can I do with a degree in anthropology? For students majoring in other areas, such as business, engineering, or psychology, we need to address the question, How can anthropological insights or research methods help me understand and solve human problems? If we can provide such a service, we increase the likelihood that students will find creative solutions to the professional problems that await them, and we brighten the future for our anthropology majors by underscoring the usefulness of an anthropological perspective in attempts to solve the practical problems of today's world.

Over the years, we have found that most introductory texts have done little more than include a chapter on applied anthropology at the end of the book. This suggests, at least to students, that most of anthropology has no relevance to their lives. Such treatment also implies that the application of anthropological knowledge is a tangent or afterthought—at best an additional subject area, such as kinship or politics.

We disagree. We believe that the applications of anthropology cut across and infuse all the discipline's subfields. This book is a collection of articles that provide examples of both basic and applied research in biological anthropology, archaeology, cultural anthropology, and linguistic anthropology.

One of our primary goals is to demonstrate some of the ways our discipline is used outside the academic arena. We want anthropology to be seen as a field that is interesting as well as relevant to the real world. Like the public at large, students seem well aware that the subject matter of anthropology is fascinating, but they

seem unaware of both the fundamental questions of humanity addressed by anthropologists and the practical applications of the field. Increased public awareness of the practical contributions of anthropology is a goal that we share with many in the profession. In fact, this is a major long-term goal of the American Anthropological Association.

Although people distinguish between basic and applied research, much of anthropology falls into a gray area, having elements of both. Many selections in this book fall into that gray zone—they are brief ethnographic accounts that contain important implications for understanding and resolving problems. We could have included a large number of articles exemplifying strictly applied research—an evaluation report of agency performance, for example. Although this sort of research is fascinating and challenging to do, it is usually not exciting for students to read. We have selected articles that we believe are fascinating for students and convey the dual nature (basic/applied) of social science research.

Any student who completes an introductory course in anthropology should learn that anthropological work, in its broadest sense, may include (or at least contribute to) international business, epidemiology, program evaluation, social impact studies, conflict resolution, organizational analysis, market research, and nutrition research, even though their introductory anthropology texts make no mention of those fields. The selections in this book should help students understand why anthropology is important in today's world and also make the course more memorable and meaningful.

- We chose the readings in this book to complement the typical course in introductory anthropology. The sequence of articles follows the organization of standard anthropology textbooks, grouped under traditional headings such as kinship and marriage, rather than headings based on the applied areas such as medical anthropology or the anthropology of development. As in most contemporary textbooks, linguistic anthropology is included under

culture and communication. Had we meant this book to be a reader on applied anthropology, our organization would have been different. Although this book could be used in courses on applied anthropology (earlier editions have been), this was not our intended audience. And, for this reason, we have not provided extensive discussion of the history or definition of applied anthropology. For students interested in this, there are a number of fine books on the subject. These include *Applied Anthropology: A Practical Guide*, by Erve Chambers; *Applied Anthropology: An Introduction*, by John van Willigen; *Anthropological Praxis: Translating Knowledge into Action*, by Robert M. Wulff and Shirley J. Fiske; *Applied Anthropology in America*, by Elizabeth M. Eddy and William L. Partridge; and *Making Our Research Useful*, by John van Willigen, Barbara Rylko-Bauer, and Anne McElroy.

- To emphasize how anthropology can be put to work in different settings, we have included a number of profiles of anthropologists whose careers involve applying anthropology outside the university setting.
- To help students better understand the subject matter, we have included a number of pedagogical aids: introductions, a list of glossary terms, and guiding questions for each article; a world map that pinpoints the locations of places and peoples discussed in the articles; and, for easy reference, an extensive glossary and index.
- To help busy instructors, we have provided an instructor's manual that includes for each article a brief summary, glossary terms, and test questions.

## NEW TO THIS EDITION

Questions of race arouse significant interest both in anthropology and in society at large. For this reason we have added a new section entitled "Culture and Race." Because race is a cultural category, not a biological one, we have placed this section in the cultural anthropology part of the reader. One of the readings in this new section—the draft statement on race by the American Anthropological Association—is very short and to the point. We think all introductory anthropology students should read this. A companion piece by the zoologist Jared Diamond entitled "Race Without Color" should help students realize that racial categories are culturally constructed. Also in this new section is a reading by Peggy McIntosh concerning white privilege, which should promote interesting classroom discussions.

Related to the question of race is a new reading in the "Culture and Communication" section on the topic

of Black English vernacular. Similarly, in Part I on biological anthropology we have added an article by Alan Goodman that reconsiders the use of racial classification in forensic anthropology. Recent social events—such as the O. J. Simpson trial, attacks on affirmative action, and *The Bell Curve*—have led to a national dialogue on race. Anthropologists and students of anthropology need to be involved in that dialogue, as this responsibility is an important tradition in our discipline, dating back to Franz Boas.

Additionally, we have changed readings in other areas. In all cases, the changes, such as those in areas like archaeology and economics, have been made to provide better examples of the relevance of anthropology to solving practical problems in today's world.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We want to thank the entire staff at Mayfield Publishing Company, and especially our editor, Jan Beatty, for her vision, good humor, tolerance, and friendship. Jan has consistently demonstrated a clear understanding of what we are trying to accomplish with this book; we particularly appreciate her support of the new additions on race as part of the cultural anthropological curriculum.

We are grateful to the many instructors who returned questionnaires evaluating the selections: N. Abraham, Henry Ford Community College; A. Alvarado, University of New Mexico; M. Anderson, Purdue University; J. Beatty, Brooklyn College, City University of New York; V. Bentley-Condit, Grinnell College; B. Bogin, University of Michigan at Dearborn; J. Brink, Lock Haven University; S. Brown, Florida Atlantic University; V. Bryant, Texas A&M University; R. Bunger, East Carolina University; D. Champagne, Highland Community College; J. Clark, Creighton University; J. Coggeshall, Clemson University; G. Cook, Baylor University; K. Costa, Fall River, MA; R. Deloach, Windward Community College; J. Erdman, Columbia College; A. Fanger, Kutztown University; J. Forward, University of Massachusetts, Amherst; I. Glazer, Kingborough Community College, City University of New York; H. Gusterson, Massachusetts Institute of Technology; R. Halberstein, University of Miami; C. Hanson, University of Alaska at Anchorage; C. Hartse, Olympic College; E. Hegeman, John Jay College, City University of New York; L. Higgins, Prairie State College; B. Howell, University of Tennessee at Knoxville; J. Kiriazis, Youngstown State University; M. Knack, University of Nevada at Las Vegas; S. Kus, Rhodes College; L. Leshnik, Tenefly, NJ; J. Li, Lawrence, KS; J. McCall, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale; I. McClaurin, University of Florida at Gainesville; H.L. Miles, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga; P. Miller, College of Eastern Utah; P. Miller-Shaivitz,

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### 1     Teaching Theories: The Evolution-Creation Controversy     6

*Robert Root-Bernstein and Donald L. McEachron (The American Biology Teacher, 1982)*

Through a comparison of evolution and creationism, this article examines the logic of scientific inquiry and the characteristics of scientific theory. Scientific theories are testable and correctable, which is why they lead to new and useful knowledge.

### 2     What Are Friends For?     15

*Barbara Smuts (Natural History, 1987)*

"Friendship" between adult males and females is an important part of the society of olive baboons of Kenya. These mutually beneficial long-term relationships are usually based on female choice and are only indirectly related to sex. Observations of nonhuman primates make anthropologists rethink the origin and nature of human sociality.

### 3     What's Love Got to Do with It?     22

*Meredith Small (Discover, 1992)*

In contrast to earlier hypotheses on the importance of territorial control in human evolutionary history, contemporary theories emphasize understanding individual strategies for reproductive success. This selection is more about sex than reproduction and raises the novel question, "What is sex for?"

### 4     Dawson's Dawn Man: The Hoax at Piltdown     26

*Kenneth L. Feder (Frauds, Myths, and Mysteries, 1999)*

Paleoanthropological discovery and interpreting the fossil record to better understand our evolutionary roots are interwoven with the pride of nations wishing to ensure their place on the human family tree.



- 5 Women in Evolution: Innovation and Selection in Human Origins 39**  
*Nancy Tanner and Adrienne Zihlman (Signs, 1976)*  
 Traditionally, scientists have emphasized the male activity of hunting for the success of humans in the evolutionary story. Many anthropologists suggest, however, that this perspective has been constructed as a result of a male-biased preconception rather than actual evidence. Based on analogies to the social organization of chimpanzees and comparisons with contemporary hunter-gatherers, the authors challenge the traditional view and provide an alternative interpretation of the paleoanthropological evidence.
- 6 Ancient Bodies, Modern Customs, and Our Health 49**  
*Elizabeth D. Whitaker (1998)*  
 Biological anthropologists believe that our long evolutionary history has shaped our bodies and therefore strongly influences our health. Infant sleeping patterns and breast-feeding are linked to health issues like birth spacing, allergies, diarrhea, and dehydration, as well as increased risk of breast cancer and sudden infant death syndrome.
- 7 Ancient Genes and Modern Health 59**  
*S. Boyd Eaton and Melvin Konner (Anthroquest, 1985)*  
 Many of the serious health problems confronting us today may be the result of an incongruity between our genetic heritage as descendants of hunter-gatherers and our current diet and lifestyle. The study of Paleolithic people may be the key to a healthy life.
- 8 The Tall and the Short of It 63**  
*Barry Bogin (Discover, 1998)*  
 A biological anthropologist discusses changes in the average height of populations as an example of human plasticity in the context of changing nutrition in childhood. Our environment is shaped by culture, and it affects our outward biological characteristics or phenotype.
- 9 PROFILE OF AN ANTHROPOLOGIST Anthropometry, Assassinations, and Aircraft Disasters: A Career in Forensic Anthropology 67**  
*(Anthropology Newsletter, 1982)*  
 Throughout his career, Clyde Snow has used the skills of the physical anthropologist in studying human body measurements and skeletal anatomy to solve mysteries.
- 10 Bred in the Bone? 70**  
*Alan H. Goodman (The Sciences, 1997)*  
 Forensic anthropologists determine social characteristics of crime or accident victims based on skeletal remains. The difficulties in identifying "race" based on physical remains stem from the fact that race is not a valid scientific concept.

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- 11 The Worst Mistake in the History of the Human Race 80**  
*Jared Diamond (Discover, 1987)*  
 The agricultural revolution has long been considered one of the most important transformations in human history. But was it for the better or worse?
- 12 Disease and Death at Dr. Dickson's Mounds 85**  
*Alan H. Goodman and George J. Armelagos (Natural History, 1985)*  
 The intensification of maize agriculture among prehistoric Native Americans of the Mississippian period combined with their involvement in a trading network led to a drastic decline in their health.

- 13 Opportunities in Cultural Resources Management 90**  
*Allen G. Pastron (1988)*  
 Since the enactment of national historic preservation legislation in the 1960s and 1970s, many archaeologists have entered the expanding field of cultural resources management (CRM). CRM research, which seeks to evaluate and preserve the nation's cultural heritage, has provided archaeologists with a new set of challenges and opportunities.
- 14 The Secrets of Ancient Tiwanaku Are Benefiting Today's Bolivia 94**  
*Baird Straughan (Smithsonian, 1991)*  
 Archaeologists working at Tiwanaku discover an ingenious agricultural system used by the Inka that has led to significant increases in crop yields and the quality of life of present-day residents.
- 15 Easter's End 100**  
*Jared Diamond (Discover, 1995)*  
 Prehistory has many examples of cultures that once flourished and then collapsed—often within a relatively short period of time. Among the most mysterious and intriguing is the case of Easter Island, well known for its huge statues and speculations of Thor Hyderdahl, captain of the raft *Kon-Tiki*. What can we learn from the tragic story of the demise of an entire culture?
- 16 PROFILE OF AN ANTHROPOLOGIST From Tikal to Tucson: Today's Garbage Is Tomorrow's Artifact 106**  
*(Anthropology Newsletter, 1981)*  
 Archaeologist William Rathje shifts his research from ancient Maya to modern America and invents garbology.
- 17 Food Waste Behavior in an Urban Population 109**  
*Gail G. Harrison, William L. Rathje, and Wilson W. Hughes (Journal of Nutrition Education, 1975)*  
 Archaeological research methods applied to the study of garbage in American society lead to new insights into consumer behavior and realistic policies for our current waste disposal crisis.
- 18 Dawn of a New Stone Age in Eye Surgery 115**  
*Payson D. Sheets (1987)*  
 An anthropologist applies his knowledge of the stone tool-making technology of ancient Maya to the manufacture of surgical scalpels; his obsidian blades are more than 200 times sharper than the surgical steel scalpels currently in use.

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**PART III CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY**
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- 19 Body Ritual Among the Nacirema 122**  
*Horace Miner (American Anthropologist, 1956)*  
 The examination and analysis of the rituals of this tribe shed light on the meaning of culture and help us reflect on our own way of life.

- 20     **Loading the Bases: How Our Tribe Projects Its Own Image into the National Pastime**     126  
*Bradd Shore (The Sciences, 1990)*  
 Culture is an extraordinary human invention because it allows us to *unconsciously* interpret meanings in everyday events. This can be seen in Shore's analysis of baseball as a ritual that symbolically expresses some of Americans' central cultural ideas. Few people recognize the hidden cultural meanings of their own day-to-day behavior.
- 21     **Crack in Spanish Harlem**     133  
*Philippe Bourgois (Anthropology Today, 1989)*  
 Whereas some anthropologists travel long distances to find exotic cultures, others stay closer to home. During fieldwork in a New York neighborhood on the social organization of addicts and sellers and the economics of crack cocaine, the author comes face to face with a culture of terror. Underlying the violence, the drugs, and the ruined lives is a different view of the American dream.
- 22     **PROFILE OF AN ANTHROPOLOGIST   Corporate Anthropologists**     141  
*Jennifer J. Laabs (Personnel Journal, 1992)*  
 Since the 1930s, business anthropologists have been applying their skills to the understanding of corporate cultures, product development, and market research. This subfield has recently experienced exceptional growth.

## CULTURE AND COMMUNICATION

- 23     **Shakespeare in the Bush**     148  
*Laura Bohannan (Natural History, 1966)*  
 Laura Bohannan finds great difficulty in communicating the dramatic themes (and basic story line) of *Hamlet* to the Tiv of Nigeria. Assumptions about human motivations, morality, and the nature of reality are embedded in a cultural context and limit the possible understanding of the story. Great art does not necessarily transcend cultural boundaries.
- 24     **"To Give up on Words": Silence in Western Apache Culture**     154  
*Keith H. Basso (Southwestern Journal of Anthropology, 1970)*  
 Cross-cultural communication involves more than differences in language and gesture. This sociolinguistic analysis explores the role of silence in Apache society in particular situational contexts. There are social rules that dictate when talking is appropriate, and these rules vary across cultures.
- 25     **A Cultural Approach to Male-Female Miscommunication**     164  
*Daniel N. Maltz and Ruth A. Borker (Language and Social Identity, 1982)*  
 Misunderstandings between men and women may be due to differences in subcultural rules about speech and conversation. Sociolinguistic variation in question asking, gestures of agreement, and topic flow can cause misinterpretation of the speaker's intentions. Valuable parallels can be drawn between interethnic miscommunication and cross-class miscommunication.
- 26     **Suite for Ebony and Phonics**     176  
*John R. Rickford (Discover, 1997)*  
 When the Oakland City Schools passed a resolution about Ebonics in 1996, it created an uproar in the media. Anthropological linguists explain the meaning and origins of dialect differences. Black English vernacular is patterned and rule-governed; it has features not found in Standard English.

## CULTURE AND FOOD

- 27     **You Are What You Eat: Religious Aspects of the Health Food Movement**     181  
*Jill Dubisch (The American Dimension, 1981)*  
 Health foods are viewed as a system of symbols that represent a particular world view. As a system of beliefs and practices, the health food movement has some of the characteristics of a religion.
- 28     **Chinese Table Manners: You Are *How* You Eat**     189  
*Eugene Cooper (Human Organization, 1986)*  
 Knowing good manners from bad is extremely important in cross-cultural encounters. The author heightens our sensitivity by describing Chinese table manners.
- 29     **Culture and the Evolution of Obesity**     196  
*Peter J. Brown (Human Nature, 1991)*  
 Why do people get fat? Is it cultural or is it in our genes—or, as with most things, is it some of each? This selection provides a cross-cultural and evolutionary analysis of how both biological and cultural factors in obesity evolved.

## CULTURE AND RACE

- 30     **Race Without Color**     207  
*Jared Diamond (Discover, 1994)*  
 Race is an important and contentious topic in the United States. Contrary to common opinion, race refers not to a biological fact but rather an arbitrary social categorization. A noted biologist explains why race is a useless idea when it comes to understanding human diversity.
- 31     **Draft Official Statement on “Race”**     214  
*American Anthropological Association (Anthropology Newsletter, 1997)*  
 Given the importance of race in current public discussion of policy and politics, and given the public confusion about race after the publication of *The Bell Curve*, the American Anthropological Association is considering the public adoption of this statement. Race is a cultural creation, not a biological fact.
- 32     **White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack**     217  
*Peggy McIntosh (1988)*  
 The author argues that there are many advantages and benefits conferred on people as members of a birth-ascribed group. Many such advantages are obvious, whereas others are not. The author helps us to see the invisible and reflect on our awareness of privilege.

## ECONOMY AND BUSINESS

- 33     **Eating Christmas in the Kalahari**     221  
*Richard Borshay Lee (Natural History, 1969)*  
 When the !Kung San make fun of an ox that the anthropologist wants to give the group for a Christmas feast, Richard Lee learns about the important value of reciprocity in a food-foraging band.

- 34      The Domestication of Wood in Haiti: A Case Study in Applied Evolution      226**  
*Gerald F. Murray (Anthropological Praxis, 1987)*  
 Using his anthropological knowledge of Haitian peasants, Gerald Murray designs and administers an astoundingly successful reforestation project. Wood as a cash crop makes good economic sense to Haitian farmers; as a consequence, both production and agricultural earnings increase.
- 35      Strings Attached      235**  
*Lee Cronk (The Sciences, 1989)*  
 Anthropologists study the universal practice of gift giving and the social expectations that such exchanges entail as well as the social relationships the gifts maintain. These anthropological principles provide a valuable window for understanding international relations.
- 36      Using Cultural Skills for Cooperative Advantage in Japan      240**  
*Richard H. Reeves-Ellington (Human Organization, 1993)*  
 Cultural values and ideals are implicit in day-to-day business interactions. Cross-cultural training programs allow project managers to significantly cut project completion time and increase profit—not to mention enhancing goodwill and trust between employees.

## GENDER AND SOCIALIZATION

- 37      Society and Sex Roles      251**  
*Ernestine Friedl (Human Nature, 1978)*  
 Equality between men and women is the product of the social organization of food production and the control of scarce resources. Cross-cultural comparisons of hunter-gatherer groups reveals marked variation in equality between the sexes. Such comparisons contain important lessons for our own society.
- 38      Family Planning Outreach and Credit Programs in Rural Bangladesh      257**  
*Sidney Ruth Schuler and Syed M. Hashemi (Human Organization, 1995)*  
 A Grameen Bank program that provides loans for poor women in rural Bangladesh empowers women by enhancing their economic role in society. One of the consequences is an increased use of contraceptives.
- 39      Child Care in China      264**  
*Bruce Dollar (Saturday Review of Education, 1973)*  
 Cultural beliefs and values of revolutionary China are purposefully encouraged in the socialization of preschool children. Group activities are used to foster cooperation, sharing, and altruism. Cultural values are reflected in and recreated by institutions of socialization.
- 40      American Schoolrooms: Learning the Nightmare      269**  
*Jules Henry (Columbia University Forum, 1963)*  
 In addition to reading, writing, and arithmetic, American children learn fundamental cultural values at school. One of the most important lessons is the fear of failure in our competitive society.



- 41 When Brothers Share a Wife 276**  
*Melvyn C. Goldstein (Natural History, 1987)*  
 Fraternal polyandry, a rare form of plural marriage, has both benefits and costs for the people of Tibet. Given the economy and ecology of this area, the practice of polyandry has adaptive functions.
- 42 African Polygyny: Family Values and Contemporary Changes 281**  
*Philip L. Kilbride (1996)*  
 Although marriage is found in all societies, it takes many forms. In contrast to multiple husbands (polyandry) found in the previous selection, this piece describes a setting in which one man may have several wives. The author argues that marriage is more about children and community than it is about sex and raises some controversial questions concerning the future of marriage.
- 43 Law, Custom, and Crimes Against Women: The Problem of Dowry Death in India 289**  
*John van Willigen and V. C. Channa (Human Organization, 1991)*  
 Dowry-related violence against women in northern India is a serious and perplexing problem, difficult to explain with an anthropological functionalist approach. Economic transformations have negatively affected the status of women and intensified economic pressures on families to provide dowry at the marriage of daughters.

#### POLITICS, LAW, AND WARFARE

- 44 The Kpelle Moot 300**  
*James L. Gibbs, Jr. (Africa, 1963)*  
 The informal moot, a method of resolving disputes among the Kpella of Liberia, is significantly different from our court system. It emphasizes the mending of social relations between the disputing parties; the process of the hearing is therapeutic. The moot is a useful alternative model for settling disputes in our own society.
- 45 Gauging the Winds of War 308**  
*Bruce Bower (Science News, 1991)*  
 One of the most widespread characteristics of human societies is our propensity to destroy ourselves through violent conflict between politically autonomous groups. What are the roots of genocide and ethnic cleansing? Is humankind condemned to a future of mutual destruction?
- 46 Contemporary Warfare in the New Guinea Highlands 312**  
*Aaron Podolefsky (Ethnology, 1984)*  
 Intertribal warfare flares up in the highlands of Papua New Guinea even after decades of relative peace. To understand why, anthropologists focus on changes in the local economic system that have, in turn, changed marriage patterns.
- 47 Hallucinogenic Plants and Their Use in Traditional Societies 321**  
*Wade Davis (Cultural Survival, 1985)*  
 The author, whose writing about psychoactive plants and *zombis* in Haiti has stirred controversy, surveys the use and functions of hallucinogenic plants in other societies. Particularly in traditional South American Indian societies, hallucinogens play a central role in religion and ritual.

- 48     **PROFILE OF AN ANTHROPOLOGIST    Anthropology and the World of Physicians    325**  
        *Thomas M. Johnson (Anthropology Newsletter, 1991)*  
        A well-known clinical medical anthropologist describes his work in a hospital setting. Knowledge of anthropological principles is important for medical students to become successful clinicians in cross-cultural settings.
- 49     **Ritual in the Operating Room    329**  
        *Pearl Katz (Ethnology, 1981)*  
        Rituals exist in both sacred and secular contexts, and ritual behavior is an integral part of modern surgical procedures.

## **SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CHANGE**

- 50     **Women, Minorities, and Indigenous Peoples: Universalism and Cultural Relativity    340**  
        *Carole Nagengast (Journal of Anthropological Research, 1997)*  
        Does cultural relativity mean that there are no universal principles of human rights? Does anything go, so long as it can claim some cultural tradition? How do we understand and balance these competing principles?
- 51     **Advertising and Global Culture    353**  
        *Noreene Janus (Cultural Survival, 1983)*  
        The expansion of the world economic system depends on the creation of new consumer demands through advertising. Do developing countries have the right to reject mass advertising for products that their citizens cannot afford?
- 52     **The Price of Progress    357**  
        *John H. Bodley (Victims of Progress, 1990)*  
        Economic development, sometimes called "progress," can bring about unintended social and medical consequences, especially for marginalized tribal peoples. New disease burdens, ecological degradation, and increased discrimination are among the hidden costs of economic change for many people.

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# Introduction:

## Understanding Humans and Human Problems

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To the uninitiated, the term *anthropology* conjures up images of mummies' tombs, Indiana Jones, and treks through steaming jungles or over high alpine peaks. Anthropologists agree that their chosen field is exciting, that they have been places and seen things that few experience firsthand, and that they have been deeply and emotionally involved in understanding the human condition. At the same time, however, the vision of anthropology presented by Hollywood has probably done more to obscure the true nature of the profession than it has to enlighten the public about what we really do.

Providing an accurate image of anthropology and anthropological work is both simple and complex. Essentially, anthropology is the study of people, or more properly, of humankind. But, you may say, many disciplines study people: psychology, sociology, history, biology, medicine, and so on. True, but anthropology is different in that it seeks to integrate these separate and perhaps more narrow views of humanity. To understand ourselves, we need to join these disparate views into a single framework, a process that begins with our biological and evolutionary roots, explores the development of culture through the prehistoric and historical periods, probes the uniquely human ability to develop culture through communication, and examines the diversity of recent and present-day cultures that inhabit the globe.

From this conception of the *holistic* and *comparative* study of humankind emerge what are termed the four fields of anthropology: biological (or physical) anthropology, archaeology, anthropological linguistics, and cultural anthropology. Some universities offer an introductory course that covers all four subfields. Other schools cover the subfields in two or three separate introductory courses. Each approach has its advan-

tage. The former may more fully integrate the biocultural and historical dimensions of humanity; the latter allows students to explore each subfield in greater depth. This book introduces you to the four fields of anthropology and how they are used in today's world.

Another way to divide the discipline—in fact almost any discipline—is into *basic* and *applied* research. These categories are important in this reader because we would like students to appreciate both the basic and the applied sides of anthropology.

A survey of natural and social scientists and engineers conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau for the National Science Foundation used the following definitions of these fundamental concepts: *Basic research* is study directed toward gaining scientific knowledge primarily for its own sake. *Applied research* is study directed toward gaining scientific knowledge in an effort to meet a recognized need.

Anthropology is a discipline concerned primarily with basic research. It asks "big" questions concerning the origins of humankind, the roots of human nature, the development of civilization, and the functions of our major social institutions (such as marriage and religion). Nevertheless, anthropologists have put the methods and skills developed in basic research to use in solving human problems and fulfilling the needs of society. Anthropologists have, for example, worked with medical examiners in the identification of skeletal remains. They have also helped communities preserve their cultural heritage and businesses and government agencies understand the social impacts of programs or development projects.

Although the application of anthropology has a long history, it has, until recent years, remained in the shadows of pure or basic research. The last twenty years have seen a change. Anthropologists have moved

beyond their traditional roles in universities and museums and now work in a broad range of settings. They are employed in many government agencies, in the private sector, and in a variety of non-research capacities (such as administrators, evaluators, or policy analysts). Profiles of people in nonacademic careers (consumer marketing, high-tech industry, and school administration) can be found in this book.

In response to the growing opportunities for anthropologists outside academia and to the demands of students, an increasing number of master's degree and doctoral programs provide training specifically in the applications of anthropology. This is not to say that the classified ads list jobs titled "anthropologist." Rather, for those interested in anthropology, there are increasing opportunities to find careers that draw on anthropological training and skills. At the same time, studies have shown that there will be increasing job opportunities for anthropologists in universities and colleges during the late 1990s and beyond.

In this era of multiculturalism, there is increasing recognition that our society—indeed, our world—is a culturally diverse social mosaic. Living in a multicultural society presents real challenges stemming from chronic ethnocentrism and persistent social tension.

But it also brings a cultural richness, even luxuriance, of diversity in art, food, language, values, and beliefs.

Applications of anthropology are found in all four fields and include the identification of skeletal remains (forensics); the study of size and fit for the design of clothing, furniture, or airplane cockpits (ergonomics); exploration of the patterns and causes of disease (epidemiology); evaluation of the effectiveness of programs (from Third World development to crime prevention); assessment of community needs; prediction of the social impact of change; analysis of organizations such as businesses and government agencies; market research; and research into health and nutrition—just to name a few. School administrators, engineers, doctors, business leaders, lawyers, medical researchers, and government officials now recognize that the knowledge, unique perspective, and research skills of anthropologists are applicable to practical problems—in the United States and elsewhere in the world.

As we explore anthropology, keep in mind the interplay between and interdependence of basic cultural research and the applications of anthropological knowledge and research methods to the solution of human problems.