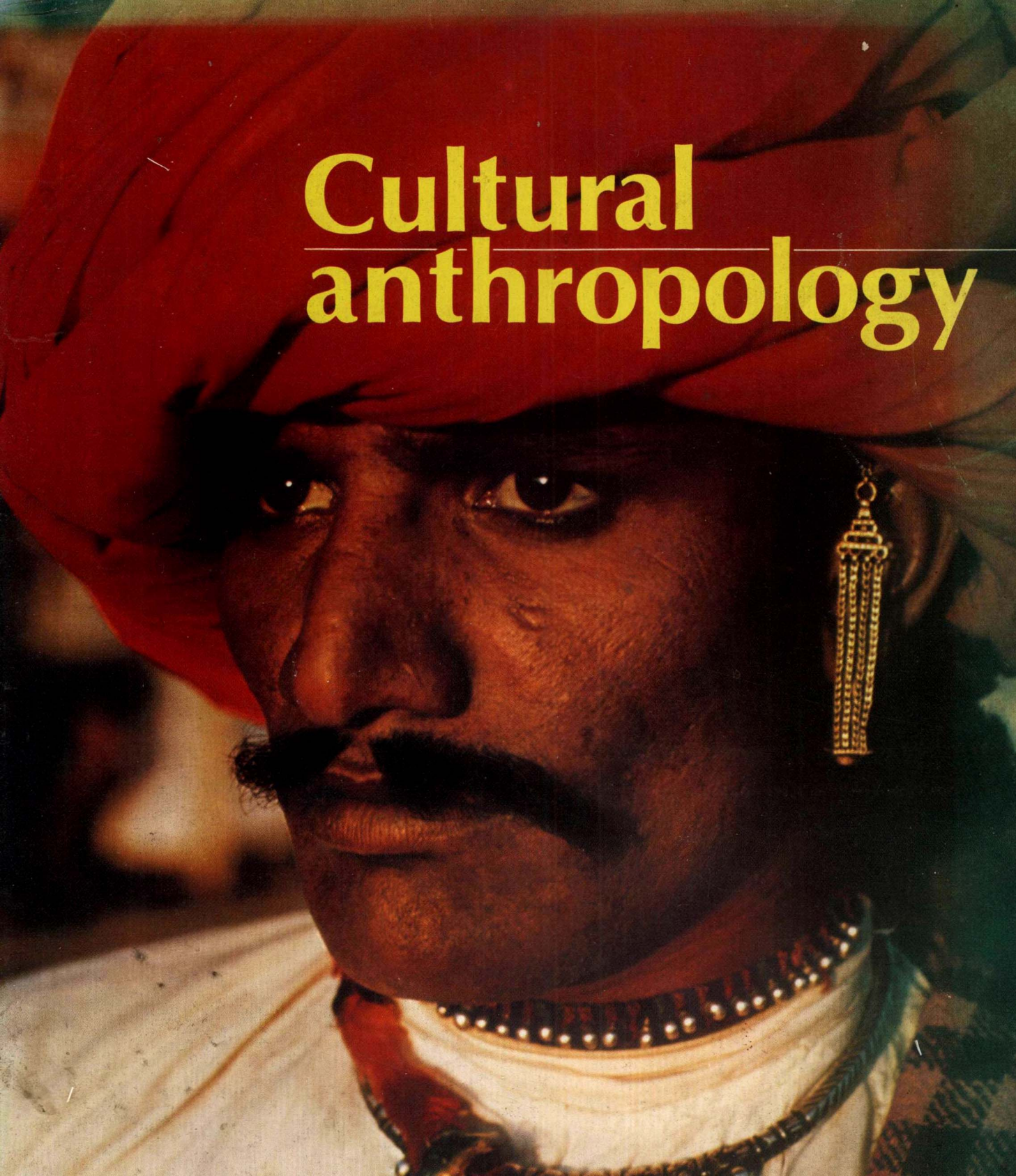


# Cultural anthropology

A close-up portrait of a man with a mustache, wearing a red turban and a white shirt. He is looking directly at the camera with a serious expression. He is wearing a large, ornate earring and a beaded necklace. The text "Cultural anthropology" is overlaid in yellow.

# **Cultural anthropology**

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University of Vermont



## **A Leogryph Book**

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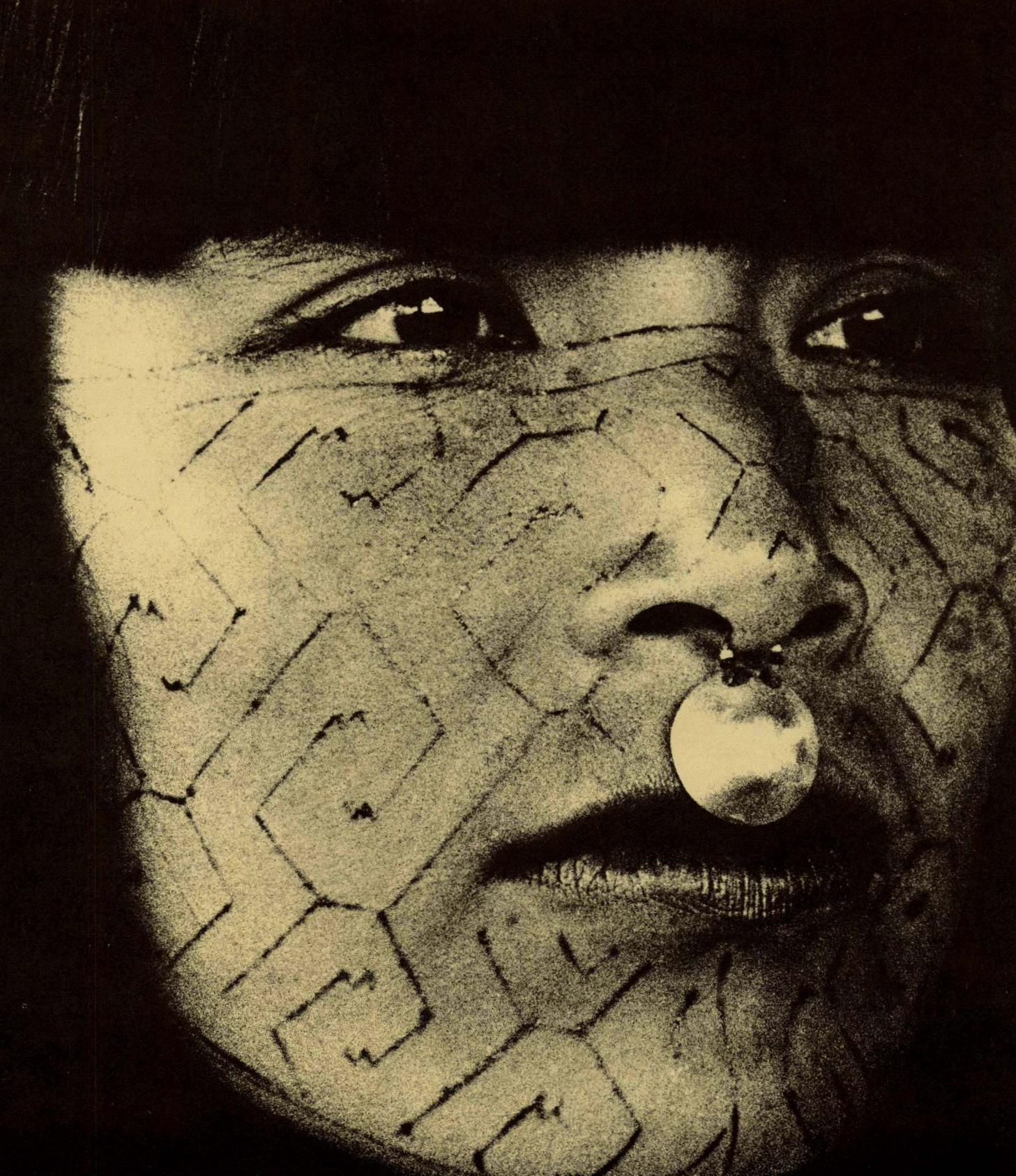
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# Preface

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## **Purpose of the book**

This text is designed for introductory anthropology courses at the college level. It focuses primarily on cultural anthropology, presenting the key concepts and terminology of that branch of the discipline, but also includes chapters on physical anthropology and linguistics.

The aim of the text is to give the student a thorough introduction to the principles and processes of cultural anthropology. Because there are many ways to teach anthropology effectively and because anthropologists in general are a pragmatic group, willing to draw on any theoretical approach that offers insights into human behavior, the text draws from the research and ideas of a number of schools of anthropological thought. Therefore, the student will be exposed to a mix of such approaches as evolutionism, historical particularism, diffusionism, functionalism, French structuralism, structural functionalism, and others.

Each author has his own ideas about the way a textbook should be written and how the material should be presented. Some prefer to present only the most basic information about the subject with a minimum of graphic material and student aids. Such a design, it is felt, allows the teacher great latitude in the classroom: it is up to him to fill in the details and enrich the text with examples and other explanatory materials. Other authors think the best texts are those that attract the student's attention with extensive, lavish photographs and other graphics, study questions, projects, sample tests, and the like. Each of these methods has its merits. However, this text takes an eclectic approach, choosing the best from both methods. The book attempts to evoke a maximum of student understanding by presenting anthropology as interestingly as possible: clarity of expression in defining ideas and concepts; an orderly presentation of material; abundant colorful examples to illustrate concepts; numerous photographs and other graphic material including six full-color portfolios;

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suggested annotated reading lists and up-to-date original studies at the end of each chapter; a glossary; and a comprehensive bibliography with 500 entries.

## Advantages

In addition to thoroughly covering the basics of cultural anthropology, the text also recognizes the fact that anthropology is the most human of the social sciences, examining through participant observation the intimate details of the daily lives of people in small-scale societies. To give the student some of the flavor of the close relationship that prevails between the anthropologist and the people he studies, the text includes at the end of each chapter an Original Study excerpted from the fieldwork of some eminent practicing anthropologist. Moreover, the study presents the most interesting part of the work from which it was drawn, thus functioning as a stimulus to learning, indirectly inducing the student to consult the original work for further reading. For example, at the end of Chapter 1 is an Original Study extracted from *The Mountain People* by Colin Turnbull, who explains what it is like to be an anthropologist by discussing in vivid detail some of the unique experiences encountered by him in the field.

Another advantage of this text is that each chapter has been developed as a self-contained unit of study. This method of organization facilitates student comprehension and gives the teacher greater freedom, enabling him to assign readings from the text in accordance with his own particular pedagogical method and sequence of presenting the material. Finally, each chapter itself has been organized into easily digestible segments by the liberal use of sub-heads, numbered entries, and other dividing techniques.

## Organization of the book

The book has been divided into five parts.

**Part 1 The study of culture**, introduces the concept of culture, discusses its role in anthropology, and its history. Chapter 1 defines culture, its characteristics, and processes; Chapter 2 is a history of the development of the discipline; and Chapter 3 describes the role of culture in human evolution.

**Part 2 Culture and man**, covers the way man communicates, behaves, and lives in groups. Chapter 4 examines language, the vehicle by which culture is transmitted, and thus introduces linguistics as a sub-division of anthropology; Chapter 5 raises the question of the relationship between culture and personality, thus introducing the student to psychological anthropology; and Chapter 6 discusses patterns of subsistence, analyzing the ways small-scale societies successfully adapt to the environment through culture.



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**Part 3 The formation of groups,** deals with the ways culture brings about the organization of groups, which themselves are necessary for the cooperative behavior on which human life depends. Chapter 7 describes marriage and the family, Chapter 8 looks at kinship and descent, and Chapter 9 analyzes other forms of social organization necessary for group living.

**Part 4 Social integration,** deals with the things groups do, and the ways different groups are integrated into larger social units. Chapters 10 through 12 describe economics, politics, and other kinds of social controls. Other chapters examine the integrative roles of religion and art.

**Part 5 Change and the future,** treats the ways cultures change, and how change may affect future social life. Chapter 15 looks at the dynamics of culture change, and Chapter 16 concludes the text with some speculations on the future of man from an anthropological viewpoint.

## Outstanding features of the book

### 1. Readability

The purpose of a textbook is to transmit and register ideas and information, to induce the readers to see old things in new ways and to think about what they see. A book may be the most elegantly written, most handsomely designed, most lavishly illustrated text available on the subject, but if it is not interesting, clear, and comprehensible to the student, it is valueless as a teaching tool.

To aid readability, this text is carefully structured, each section within the book and each chapter within each section organized so that the material is presented to the student in segments, each clearly separated from the other. It is easier for the student to grasp and retain the material if it is presented as a series of discrete "quanta," rather than as a continuous flow of information.

The readability of the text is also enhanced by the writing style. The book is designed to present even the most difficult concepts in prose that is alive, energetic, and easy to retain. Where technical terms have been necessary, they are always italicized, carefully defined in the text, and defined again in the glossary in simple, clear language.

Because much learning is based on analogy, numerous and colorful examples have been utilized to illustrate, emphasize, and clarify anthropological concepts. Wherever possible, there is a cross-cultural perspective, comparing cultural practices in other societies with those of the student's own culture. Many educators feel that this practice makes ideas easier to grasp because it renders them more familiar. For example, in the chapter on sex and marriage, the marriage system and sex roles practiced in our own country are compared with those practiced by non-Western peoples. Additionally, the text points out how the communes organized by the disenchanted young of this country are really attempts to recreate the kinship networks found in small-scale societies. Thus, from such examples, the student can perceive the nature of a cultural entity,



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such as marriage; he can also see its varieties, its processes, and the way it relates to his own culture and existence.

## **2. Original studies**

A special feature of this text is the Original Study that follows each chapter. These studies, which consist of selections from case studies and other original works of anthropologists, are the actual writings of men and women working in anthropology today. Each study is integrally related to the material in the chapter it follows, and often sheds additional light on some important anthropological concept or subject area found in the chapter.

The idea behind this feature grew from an appreciation of the fact that anthropology does not operate in a vacuum: it is a fast-developing discipline that studies new societies and examines old ones from new points of view. Consequently, new ideas and models of social interaction are generated each year by practicing anthropologists. The studies represent an attempt to keep the student abreast of current research in the field, and enable him to experience almost first-hand some of the excitement generated by new anthropological ideas and discoveries.

Moreover, the new feature is most suitable for anthropology because it is difficult for the student to learn and develop an interest in the subject without some feel for what a real small-scale society is like, and how anthropologists actually go about studying it. Thus, at the end of Chapter 10, which covers economic systems, there is an Original Study by Robert and Evelyn Rohner which describes the events that take place during a Kwakiutl potlatch. Other Original Studies include details of the Nambikwara family life by Claude Levi-Strauss, following Chapter 7; an examination of Pueblo kinship by Edward Dozier, following Chapter 8; and an analysis of the role of the shaman among the reindeer herders and fishermen of northeast Asia by William Howells, following Chapter 13.

## **3. Illustrations**

Sociologists, anthropologists, and other social scientists have discovered that, under the influence of television, visual material is gaining increased importance as a teaching tool in today's classroom. Accordingly, this text uses numerous illustrations and other graphic materials. The illustrations have been chosen to supplement and emphasize the text and to clarify for the student concepts that are not easily rendered into words. A number of the illustrations are unusual in that they are not the "standard" anthropological textbook photographs; each has been chosen because it complements the text in some distinctive way. For example, the photos on pages 250-251 depict several market scenes that display various cultures' approaches to trade. The line drawings, maps, charts, and tables were selected especially for their usefulness in illustrating, emphasizing, or clarifying certain anthropological concepts and should prove valuable teaching aids.



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The six full-color portfolios, designed to stimulate the student's eye and mind, encompass the prehistoric megaliths of Europe, ancient art of the old world, art of the Precolumbian New World, the culture of the Persian Nomads, the world of the Eskimo hunter-gatherer, and the American Indian. Each portfolio has a definite theme and includes a text that explains the illustrations and makes some important anthropological point. For example, the portfolio on the American Indian contains, in paintings by European and American artists and in the words of a Seneca Indian chief, a capsule history of the cultural contact between the Indians and the white man.

#### **4. Summaries and Suggested readings**

At the end of each chapter is a summary containing the kernels of the most important ideas presented in the chapter. The summaries, which are numbered and so broken down into easy-to-cope-with units, provide handy reviews for the student. Also following each chapter is a list of suggested readings which will supply the inquisitive student with further information about specific anthropological points which may interest him. Each reading is fully annotated and provides information as to the content, value, and readability of the book. The books suggested are oriented either toward the general reader or toward the interested student who wishes to explore further the more technical aspects of some material.

#### **5. Glossary and Bibliography**

An extensive glossary at the end of the book provides the student with a complete anthropological dictionary in miniature. The glossary defines all the important terms used in the text, in clear, understandable language. The bibliography at the end of the book is a complete reference tool in itself; it contains a listing of 500 books, monographs, and articles from scholarly journals and popular magazines.

#### **6. Supplement**

Teachers will find the accompanying Instructor's Manual helpful in arranging their curricula. The Manual contains suggestions on topics for class discussions, subjects for student term papers, and sample questions for objective and essay-type examinations.



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## Acknowledgments

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The greatest debt of all is owed my wife and children, for having put up with my preoccupation with this book for the past several months.







# Cultural anthropology

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