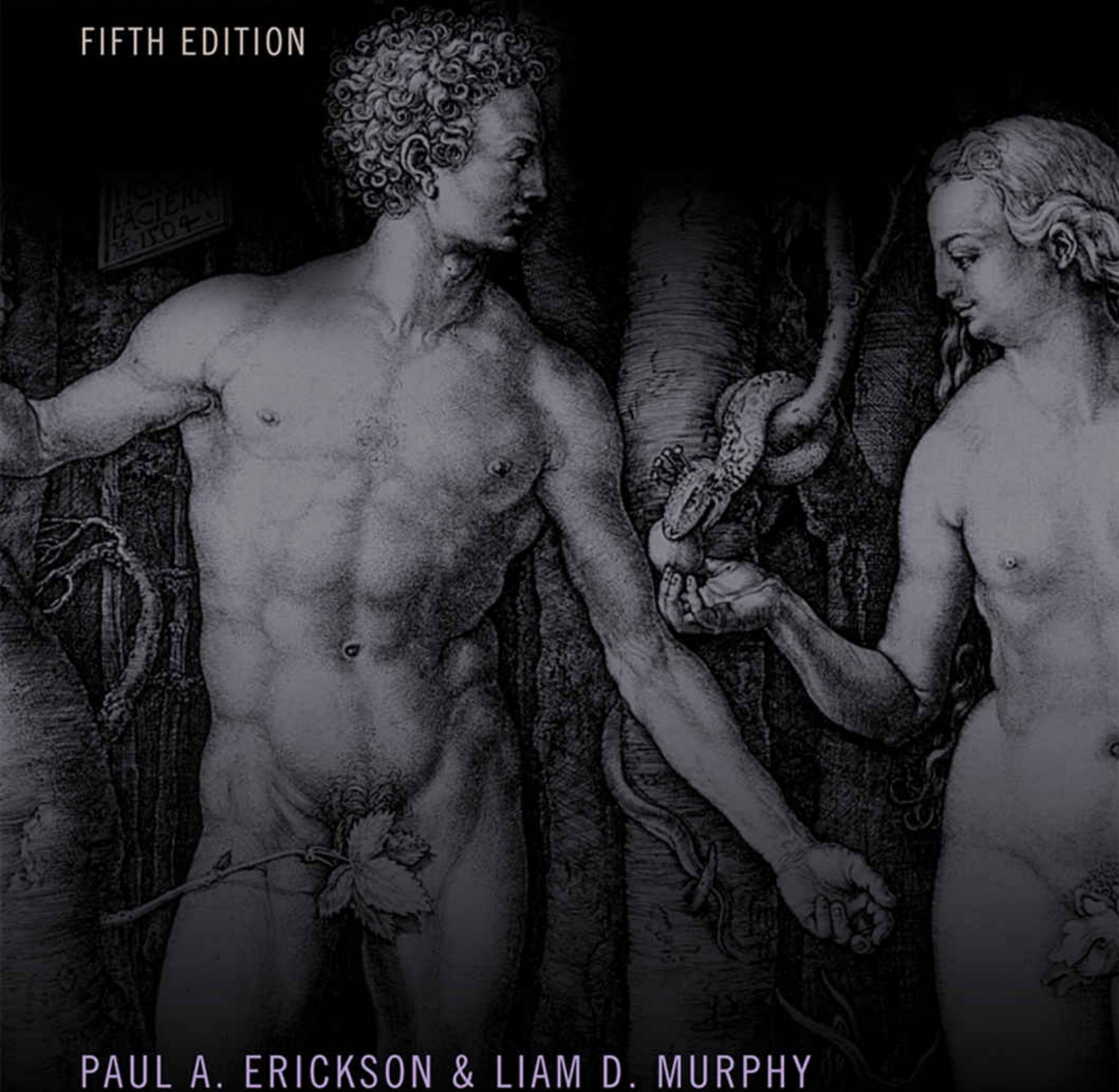


A HISTORY OF ANTHROPOLOGICAL THEORY

FIFTH EDITION



PAUL A. ERICKSON & LIAM D. MURPHY

A History of Anthropological Theory

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Paul A. Erickson & Liam D. Murphy



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For Jeffrey
For Siobhan

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Preface

Some years ago, Paul Erickson organized a session of papers presented at an annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association exploring the theme “Teaching the History of Anthropological Theory: Strategies for Success.” His own paper was a survey of courses in the history of anthropological theory taught at colleges and universities throughout Canada and the United States. The survey revealed that such courses were widespread in both graduate and undergraduate curricula. It also revealed that, owing to the diversified nature of anthropology, there was considerable variation in the scope of the courses and the way they were taught. Especially noteworthy were the great variation in texts and professors’ serious dissatisfaction with their suitability. A recurring complaint of professors was, “We *need* a suitable textbook.”

Shortly thereafter, Erickson and Liam Murphy began a rich conversation concerning the history of anthropological theory that marked the beginning of a sustained “dialogue with the ancestors.” Appropriately, this dialogue has been mirrored in the relations between the authors themselves: Erickson, the professor, and Murphy, the erstwhile student, himself turned professor. To date, this conversation has yielded the twin successes of four editions of *A History of Anthropological Theory* and its companion volume, *Readings for a History of Anthropological Theory*.

In the beginning, *A History of Anthropological Theory* was broadly based on a senior-level undergraduate course that Erickson had been teaching at Saint Mary’s University for many years, a course in which Murphy himself was enrolled while a student there. As with any university course, this one had evolved through the incorporation of elements of various texts used on and off for years. These included Paul Bohannon and Mark Glazer’s *High Points in Anthropology* (1989), Peter Bowler’s *Evolution* (1989), Annemarie de Waal Malefijt’s *Images of Man* (1974), Bruce Trigger’s *A History of Archaeological Thought* (1990), and Marvin Harris’s *The Rise of Anthropological Theory* (1968) and *Cultural Materialism* (1979). The second, third, fourth, and now fifth editions of *A History of Anthropological Theory*

have incorporated more of Murphy's bibliographic sources, especially pertaining to the later twentieth century, when he joined the profession, and the early twenty-first century. Although the book has not been written from any of these other authors' theoretical perspectives, its presentation and interpretation in places may be similar. Therefore, we are indebted to the authors for inspiration and for an organization of material that works in the classroom. Over the years, in the subsequent editions, we have put more and more of our own stamp on the book, especially in presenting theories of the later twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. If certain theories or theorists appear to have been "left out," the reason is not disrespect, but rather our desire to keep the book brief.

In the main, our fifth edition adopts the North American "four-field" framework for anthropology as a general discipline with specialized subfields of linguistic, archaeological, physical, and cultural anthropology. We acknowledge that in the early twenty-first century, the four-field framework is under stress, and we in fact discuss that stress in our conclusion. Nevertheless, most North American anthropology remains cultural anthropology, so the book concentrates on this subfield—but not exclusively. It includes key sections on linguistic, archaeological, and physical anthropology that can be read with profit by all anthropology students. Unlike many comparable texts, which begin in the eighteenth or nineteenth century, our book begins in antiquity, in the understanding that all subdisciplines of anthropology are deeply rooted in Western experience.

This fifth edition of *A History of Anthropological Theory* incorporates some innovative and user-friendly changes. There is a new section on anthropologies of the digital age, and the section on feminism and anthropology has been expanded significantly into a section that addresses both gender and sexuality as partially independent fields of study. Throughout, including in the conclusion, the text has been updated, as have sources and suggested readings. We hope that these changes will make the fifth edition more engaging and accessible for students and teachers alike.

Readers will still observe that many sections of the book are subdivided to reflect the influence of particular individuals and "schools." Our choice to present our discussion in this way is no accident. It reflects a consensus that in university courses on the history of anthropology and anthropological theory, the "founding fathers" (and mothers) and "important" theories and theorists generally receive expanded coverage. As we explain in our updated

conclusion, these “ancestors” merit special focus in texts such as this one, insofar as their ideas continue to provide a degree of intellectual coherence and a historical point of reference for students entering the discipline.

A History of Anthropological Theory is designed to serve as an introductory text, which users may wish to supplement with lengthier, more detailed, and special-interest texts, including primary-source “readers” such as our own *Readings for a History of Anthropological Theory*, also in an updated fifth edition, whose organization parallels the organization of this book.

Experience has taught us that students in history of anthropological theory courses are usually prepared with background in one or more of the anthropology subfields, but rarely in all of them. For this reason, we have attempted to write *A History of Anthropological Theory* in straightforward, non-polemical, and jargon-free prose. The book is also largely free of elaborate references to the voluminous history of anthropological theory scholarship, and there are no footnotes or endnotes, only a list of follow-up sources and recommended readings. We have, however, included birth and death dates for key historical figures, where such dates were obtainable. The majority of students in history of anthropological theory courses are there not by choice, but because the course is a departmental major requirement. A common lament of these students is the challenging vocabulary of theoretical “-isms” and “-ologies.” To help ease their pain, we have attempted to define each challenging word the first time it is used meaningfully in the text and have provided key words that are bolded in the text and defined in the margins and glossary. The new, more thought-provoking study questions should also help. Still, students should not be lulled into complacency. Learning (and teaching) the history of anthropological theory is usually difficult, although ultimately highly intellectually rewarding.

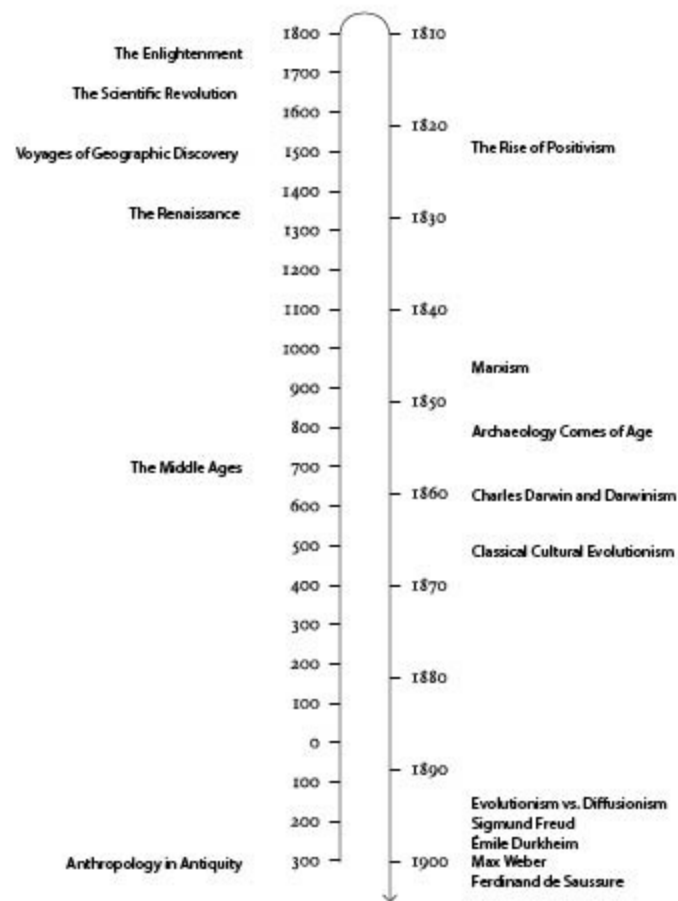
Producing the fifth edition of *A History of Anthropological Theory* has been extremely gratifying to us, personally as well as professionally. As has previously been the case, we would not have enjoyed the process nearly as much were it not for the moral and professional support of many people. Erickson wishes to thank his wife Dawn Erickson for her invaluable advice and support. Murphy wishes to thank Paul and Dawn Erickson for their ongoing encouragement and friendship. This fifth edition is dedicated to the memory of Paul’s son, Jeffrey, and to Liam’s beautiful daughter, Siobhan. Both authors are also indebted to the staff of the University of Toronto Press,

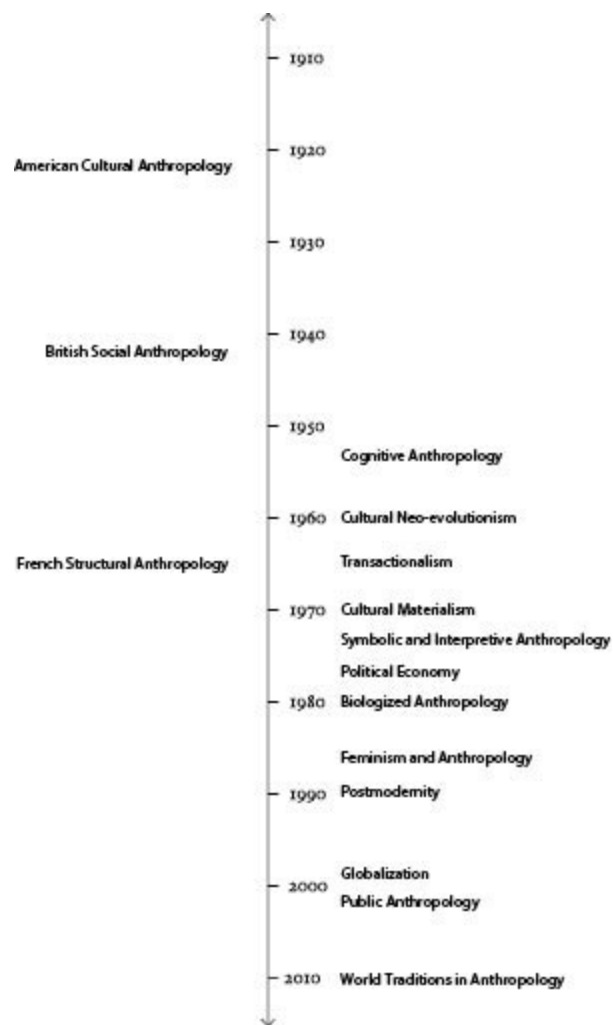
primarily for being such enthusiastic supporters of our work, but also for being extremely helpful and accommodating at all stages of the revision process. Special mention is due to editor Anne Brackenbury and her associates, who have always been “in our corner,” as well as the numerous anonymous reviewers who provided valuable advice on how to improve the book. Finally, we are very grateful to colleagues, students, and interested readers who gave us feedback. Through five editions, *A History of Anthropological Theory* appears to still “have legs.” We hope that this edition finds new users to join loyal continuing users, allowing it to walk for some time to come.

Paul A. Erickson
Halifax, Nova Scotia

Liam D. Murphy
Sacramento, California

Timeline





Introduction

Key Words: humanism, religion, science

Anthropology is a fascinating field of study of all peoples past and present. Traditionally in North America, the field has been divided into four subfields. The first subfield, physical or biological anthropology, is concerned with the evolutionary origins and diversity of the species *Homo sapiens*. Physical anthropologists include paleoanthropologists, who study human fossils; primatologists, who study our monkey, ape, and related evolutionary “cousins”; and human geneticists. The second subfield, archaeological anthropology, is the study of artifacts, or the material remains of past human activity. Prehistoric archaeologists specialize in studying the artifacts of peoples without written records, while historical archaeologists specialize in studying the artifacts of peoples with written records. Archaeologists cooperate with a wide range of other specialists, including geologists, biologists, and historians. The third subfield, linguistic anthropology, is concerned with the nature of language in general and with the nature, history, and social function of the multitude of particular languages spoken and written around the world. The fourth subfield, cultural or sociocultural anthropology, is the study of human lifeways and thoughts, often summed up simply as “culture.” Cultural anthropologists, the most numerous in the field, specialize in studying one or more cultural groups and domains, such as Inuit art, Hopi religion, or Australian Aboriginal kinship. Taken together, these four subfields have given anthropology a uniquely “holistic,” or broad-based and overarching, worldview. Anthropologists are quick to assert that any statement about “human nature” must pertain to the biological and cultural nature of *everybody*.

A conspicuous trend in late-twentieth-century anthropology, at least in North America, was the diversification of the traditional subfields into an increasing number of special-interest groups. Arguably, this trend began with the addition of a “fifth” subfield, applied anthropology, which is designed to accommodate the interests of anthropologists finding employment outside

universities and museums. In the twenty-first century, some would even identify a “sixth” subfield, public anthropology, representing the large number of anthropologists engaged with public issues. The trend has continued to the point where, in 2015, the American Anthropological Association, the largest association of professional anthropologists in the world, was divided into some 40 special-interest sections. These sections have interests as diverse as those represented, for example, by the Association for Feminist Anthropology, the Association for Queer Anthropology, the Society for the Anthropology of Food and Nutrition, the Society for Visual Anthropology, the Society for the Anthropology of Europe, and the Society for the Anthropology of Consciousness. Under circumstances of such diversity, anthropology, prone to introspection anyway, was bound to question its holistic worldview and intensify its efforts to understand just what it stands for theoretically.

“Theory” in anthropology stands for different things in different anthropological circles. By invoking broad, often unstated, definitions such as “general orientation,” “guiding principle,” and “intellectual framework,” anthropologists have been able to discuss theory without always having to articulate just what it means to themselves or to others. This is particularly true in the “history of anthropological theory,” an established topic of anthropological discourse in which “original,” “important,” and “influential” theories and theorists are identified relatively easily in hindsight. Such theories and theorists become “canonized” simply by being referred to as original, important, and influential by a sufficient number of anthropologists over a sufficient period of time. They then form lineages of theoretical ancestors in which descendants position themselves to gain theoretical identity.

In most North American colleges and universities, undergraduate anthropology majors and graduate students complete a course or course unit in the history of anthropological theory. The main manifest, or explicit, function of this experience is to enhance the theoretical sophistication of students and to introduce them to theories and theorists with whom they might not otherwise become acquainted. Its latent or implicit function is to serve as a rite of passage, in which new generations of anthropologists “join the club” by recapitulating its intellectual history. Unfortunately, many students regard the study of past anthropology as a mere backdrop to “real” research. Still others dismiss it as a collection of erroneous perspectives or

cautionary tales about people who never *really* understood human life. Approached as a “dialogue with the ancestors,” however, rather than “one dead guy a week” (these felicitous phrases come from William Fowler and Julia Harrison), the history of anthropological theory can be exciting, thought-provoking, and moving. It also can be humbling and nurture respect, as “younger” anthropologists realize that they are heirs to an anthropological legacy that is time-honoured and, in the main, noble.

Any history of anthropological theory is written by a particular historian at a particular time and in a particular place—what some contemporary theorists would call an “historical moment.” A respectable historian aims to be truthful but cannot, of course, expect to achieve “*the* truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.” This is because the historian must select elements from the past and put them together in a way that makes sense in the present, which is always changing. The inevitable result is that the historian’s analytical categories may seem “imposed” on the past, rendering, for example, certain early figures and ideas as “unfairly” proto-anthropological. By selecting certain past figures and their ideas and by interpreting them in light of subsequent events to which we know they (often unwittingly) contributed, the historian can help us understand where anthropology came from and, therefore, what it really is.

In the analytical perspective adopted in this book, anthropological theory can be considered to be a branch of **science**, **humanism**, or **religion**. The differences among these three systems of thought have to do with how they treat the relationships among nature, people, and a cosmological order of existence frequently conceived of as “God.” In science, people and God are treated as secondary to nature, which is paramount in the sense that nature encompasses people and God. In the science of biology, for example, people are considered to be composed of pre-existing natural elements like carbon and water, while in the science of psychiatry, or at least some versions of it, God is considered to be created by a pre-existing human brain. In humanism, God and nature are treated as secondary to people, who are paramount in the sense that people encompass both God and nature. Examples of humanism can be found in literature and philosophy, where “Man is the measure of all things” and “human nature,” especially creatively expressed, is the central fact of existence. Finally, in religion, nature and people are treated as secondary to God, who is paramount in the sense that God encompasses nature and people. A familiar example of religion is the Judeo-Christian

belief, expressed in the Bible, that God created “Heaven and Earth” and, within a few days, Adam and Eve. Throughout its history, anthropology has been, in terms of these definitions, variously scientific, humanistic, and religious.

Beneath these theoretical complexities, anthropology can be seen to be searching for answers to fundamental questions asked by people everywhere, such as “Where did we come from?”, “Why do we differ?”, and “How does the world work?” Confronting an avalanche of technical information in books, articles, and reports, anthropologists sometimes forget that these questions are universal and, therefore, that all peoples have their own versions of anthropology. The version relevant to most readers of this book is the one that developed in the history of Western civilization.

PART ONE

The Early History of Anthropological Theory

Perhaps more than any other Western academic discipline, anthropology embodies the ambition of scholarship to understand the character of humanity in all its diversity and complexity. Such an understanding can hardly be achieved without an appreciation for the rich history of thought that is the foundation upon which various contemporary perspectives and theoretical orientations have been erected.

For this reason, any thorough discussion of the origins of anthropology must begin long before the formal emergence of the discipline in the late nineteenth century. In common with all Western academic disciplines, the roots of anthropology lie grounded in the intellectual traditions of the Greco-Roman “ancient” world. Traced by the historian, this world reveals the first contours of what, in hindsight, can be called a nascent anthropological perspective.

Anthropology in Antiquity

Key Words: Augustinian Christianity, cultural relativism, Sophistry, Stoicism, tabula rasa, transcendental essences

In the West, beginning in antiquity a few centuries before the birth of Christianity, Greco-Roman civilization produced several Classical intellectual traditions. Today, following the account of Annemarie de Waal Malefijt in *Images of Man*, some of these traditions seem scientific, or at least quasi-scientific, while others, such as the epic poetry of Homer (c. eighth century BCE) and Virgil (70–19 BCE), appear more humanistic or religious. The roots of what most of us today would call anthropology can be found in the efforts at early Classical science.

The first group of Classical thinkers with a semblance of science were those philosophers whose thought predates that of Socrates, teacher of Plato. The pre-Socratics were really cosmologists, who speculated on the origin and nature of the cosmos, or embodied world. Some of these speculations were materialistic, meaning that they invoked natural rather than supernatural causes. One such pre-Socratic was the Greek philosopher Thales (c. 640–c. 546), who speculated that everything in the world came from water. Another was Anaximander (c. 622–c. 547), a pupil of Thales, who said that the original substance of the cosmos was not a known element but “something boundless” and undifferentiated. A third pre-Socratic was Empedocles (c. 490–c. 430), sometimes called an ancient precursor of Darwin. Empedocles believed that the cosmos evolved as different constituent elements encountered one another and formed larger bodies that survived if they were useful, a process vaguely resembling natural selection. Finally, an extreme version of pre-Socratic materialism is represented by Democritus (c. 460–c. 370), who proposed that human bodies, minds, and behaviour derived from changes in the shape, size, and velocity of constantly moving universal particles, or “atoms.” Like other pre-Socratics, Democritus opposed the idea of a human “Golden Age” from which people had allegedly deteriorated. Instead, he saw progress and betterment in the working of natural forces.

Pre-Socratic science was not modern in our sense of the word, of course, but it was different from ancient humanism and from the religion in ancient Greek myths such as that of Prometheus, a primordial deity said to have

made people out of clay and stolen fire for them from Mount Olympus. Pre-Socratic philosophers saw people as created by nature, not gods.

Another ancient Greek tradition more scientific than religious was the tradition of travel writing, best represented by Herodotus (c. 484–c. 425), the so-called Father of History. In his travels beyond the limited world of ancient Greece, Herodotus observed diversity in race, language, and culture. He explained this diversity in a relatively objective, or non-ethnocentric, way by correlating it with geography, climate, and other features of the natural world. Herodotus was also humanistic because he stressed how human differences were caused by human, not divine, acts. This combination of science and humanism, as opposed to religion, makes his writing a kind of ancient precursor of ethnography.

In the fifth century BCE, there was a major change in Greek life when democracy in the city-state of Athens superseded the older political system based on kinship. This fundamental shift in politics was accompanied by a shift in thought, leading to new philosophical schools. One new school was **Sophistry**, which taught that practical skills and social effectiveness were goals more important than the search for objective knowledge or absolute truth. The Sophist Protagoras (c. 481–c. 411), to whom some attribute the phrase “Man is the measure of all things,” believed that human behaviour is not influenced by gods but by life circumstances. Behaviour, then, is really cultural convention and should be seen as such—a doctrine not unlike the twentieth-century doctrine of **cultural relativism**. Protagoras also explained how various cultural conventions may have come about through an evolutionary-like process. For some Sophists, relativism led to nihilism, the doctrine that nothing exists or is knowable. They became nihilists because they felt that virtues were not absolute and that knowledge was merely what was said to be true by people in power—an idea that foreshadows a key part of the nineteenth-century doctrine of Marxism. Even in the fifth century BCE, broad anthropological ideas had begun to take root.

Some important Athenian philosophers were opposed to Sophistry, however. Socrates (c. 469–399) taught that there *were* universal values, even though they were difficult to perceive and express. People had to train their minds for these tasks. Education was important, according to Socrates, because it enabled people to see through their cultural conventions, not merely manipulate them, as the Sophists advocated. Plato (c. 427–347), the famous student of Socrates, agreed with his teacher that there were such

universal values, which existed because they were innate in the human mind. According to Plato, people recognize objects because, before they perceive them, they have the *idea* of them. His *Republic* (360) was a dialogue about an ideal society constructed on the basis of people's perceptions of flaws in real societies. He reconstructed the development of society through time in order to show what had changed and what had not. What had remained the same were the **transcendental essences** of things. For more than two millennia, the enduring legacy of thinking in terms of Platonic essences encouraged physical anthropologists to view species and "races" as distinct and unchanging. Overcoming this legacy became a major challenge for twentieth-century evolutionists.

The philosopher Aristotle (384–322), Plato's student, agreed that society had developed over time, but he was much more empirical than Plato, examining the development of society in its own right rather than trying to pierce through it to a universal, transcendental realm. Aristotle was curious about the relationships among natural and social objects, which he assumed existed and were knowable. Contrasted with Plato, whose idea of transcendental essences became incorporated into religion, the legacy of Aristotle included science, inherited through Alexander the Great (356–323), whom Aristotle tutored. When Alexander the Great conquered the Greek city-states and the Persian Empire from India to Asia Minor and Egypt, founding the Egyptian city of Alexandria in 332, the scientific teachings of Aristotle spread.

Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle lived in the "Golden Age of Greece." After Alexander the Great died, the unity of Greek life and thought declined, and competing schools of thought emerged. Epicurus (c. 342–270) pursued Empedocles' belief that people comprised atoms, which were dissolved at death and reabsorbed into nature. Epicurus was an extreme utilitarian in that he considered society to be a mechanical extension of humanity and therefore subservient to it. Later, the Roman poet Lucretius (c. 96–c. 55) expressed these views more forcefully in his materialistic poem *On the Nature of Things*.

Meanwhile, the Stoics, like the Epicureans, wanted a correct and happy life, but, unlike the Epicureans, they believed that nature and society were highly orderly. According to the Stoic philosopher Zeno (c. 336–c. 264), this order was not created by people or gods but was a natural cosmic order, sometimes called Logos. This concept was later co-opted by early Christian

theologians seeking to defend their beliefs against various schools of Greek philosophy. Belief in a universal social order made it possible to compare and contrast particular social orders, a fundamental task of what today we call social science. Furthermore, according to the Stoics, matter, not mind, is real; matter can be perceived; and learning is the perception of matter. Therefore, contrary to Plato, the Stoics believed in what was later called *tabula rasa*, or “blank slate,” meaning a mind that acquires knowledge through experience rather than recognizing knowledge that is innate.

Stoicism was the philosophical bridge between the Greeks and the Romans, forming the philosophical basis for Rome’s great advances in political organization and theory. In Rome, the idea of a natural order was developed into the concept of cosmopolis, or world citizenry, by statesman and orator Marcus Tullius Cicero (106–43 BCE). At the same time, other Roman writers such as Seneca (4 BCE–65 CE) and Marcus Aurelius (121–180 CE) used the concept to explore humanistic and religious themes, paving the way for its eventual attachment to Christianity. In both realms, secular and religious, Stoicism encouraged people to make their particular thoughts and actions accord with something universal while telling them that, as rational beings, they were capable of this achievement. Such a philosophy is one of the great legacies of antiquity.

Toward the end of the Roman Empire, social conditions deteriorated, and several religions competed for appeal to the socially oppressed, all building on the Stoic idea of an overarching supernatural order in the universe. At first, these religions, or sects, were outlawed because they preached obedience to divine rather than civil law. Prominent among them were Mithraism; Orphism; the cults of Cybele, Isis, and Osiris; and Christianity. Outpacing the competition, Christianity gained converts and (ironically for a religion of the oppressed) became the state religion of Rome under Emperor Constantine I (Constantine “The Great,” c. 288–337). This action led in the fourth century to the Patristic period of Church history, during which time orthodox Church doctrine was established by Church “Fathers.” For anthropology, the most consequential Church Father was the Bishop of Hippo in northern Africa, Saint Augustine (354–430), author of *Confessions* (397) and *The City of God* (c. 425). The Augustinian version of Christianity was the version that prevailed when the Roman Empire declined and Europe entered the Middle Ages.

Major tenets of **Augustinian Christianity** were not conducive to science,

especially social, or human, science. According to Augustine, God was perfect and human nature was sinful. The cosmos and humanity were not in harmony. The cosmos had been created by an omnipotent, or all-powerful, God who was inscrutable, or unknowable. Therefore, it was pointless for people to study God or nature. Human behaviour was to be judged not by people or nature but by God. Finally, everything people could know about themselves, nature, and God was revealed in Scripture. These tenets, designed to account for the mystery of God, had the effect of smothering human curiosity and the sense that nature, too, is mysterious. Without mysteries and the curiosity to solve them, why bother to develop science?

On the positive side for science, and later for anthropology, Augustinian Christianity did stress the importance of history because it was from history, as revealed in Scripture, that Christians could learn at least something about God. Furthermore, Augustinian history was lineal, not cyclical or recurrent, and it was a universal history, not just the history of “nations.” These tenets laid the broad foundation for the temporal and spatial, or cross-cultural, perspectives of anthropology.

The legacy of antiquity to anthropology, then, was the establishment of the humanistic, religious, and scientific intellectual outlooks. In various guises, and in different times and places, these outlooks have persevered in anthropology ever since.

The Middle Ages

Key Word: Thomistic Christianity

In the period following Augustine's death, the Western Roman Empire declined and was occupied by non-Christian "barbarians" and "pagans." The Christian tradition continued to flourish, however, in the Eastern Roman, or Byzantine, Empire, with its capital at Constantinople, founded by Constantine I in 330 CE. There, and in pockets elsewhere, monastic Christian historians and encyclopedists such as Isidore of Seville (c. 560–636) denounced non-Christians while they kept the teachings of Augustine alive.

Meanwhile, the pre-Christian intellectual traditions of antiquity were sustained by Middle Eastern Semitic peoples who, following the birth of the prophet Mohammed (c. 570 CE), spread the Islamic religion out of Arabia, across northern Africa, and all the way to Spain. Contrasted with early Christians, who embraced the transcendental and otherworldly qualities of Platonism, Arab intellectuals such as Ibn Khaldûn (1332–1406) had great respect for Aristotelian logic and science. More forcefully than Plato, Aristotle counteracted Augustine's scientifically negative attitude that people were incapable of knowing nature and that nature, except through God, was incapable of being known. When Islam and Augustinian Christianity interacted, Christian theology changed.

The critical interaction between Islam and Christianity occurred in the eighth century when Islamic Moors invaded Christian Spain. Afterward, Christian theology became increasingly "rational," meaning that human reason was brought to bear on theological issues. This trend culminated in the theology of Thomas Aquinas (c. 1225–74), author of *Summa Theologica* (1267–73), one of the great treatises of the Roman Catholic Church. **Thomistic Christianity** (as the theology of Thomas Aquinas is called) differed radically from Augustinian Christianity. Unlike Augustine, Aquinas reasoned that people could, and should, know God through knowing nature. The true essence of humanity was not only sin but also the kernel of the divinity created within each human being. Human reason was a gift of God, and people were morally responsible to use this gift to glorify God by learning about God's creation, the natural world. Human reason could even be used to prove the existence of God. In Thomistic Christianity, God,

people, and nature were harmonized into a self-contained intellectual system without internal contradictions. Nothing people discovered about nature through the exercise of their God-given reason could cast doubt on the credibility and authority of God or on his representative Church on Earth—or so it was asserted.

In order to keep Thomistic Christianity intact, it was necessary to ensure that science remained consistent with the Word of God. This was the job of numerous scholarly “commentators,” who interpreted the writings of Aristotle and Church Fathers opportunistically. Scholasticism, as the doctrine supporting this activity came to be called, predominated in the Middle Ages. It has been caricatured as “seeing how many angels can be fitted onto the head of a pin.” Inevitably, cracks in the whole system surfaced, and when it became impossible, or simply too difficult, to reconcile science and religion, scholars began to choose one over the other. Once this happened, the door was open for anthropology to develop, by contemporary standards, along more scientific lines.

The intellectual unity achieved by Thomistic Christianity was a kind of “medieval synthesis,” which unified the three elements whose varied relationships define science, humanism, and religion—that is, nature, people, and God. Intellectually precarious from the start, it did not last long. Three complex events produced knowledge that, outside Thomistic circles, made the synthesis unravel. These events were the Renaissance, voyages of geographical discovery, and the Scientific Revolution, each of which shaped modern anthropology in critically important ways.

The Renaissance

Key Words: cross-cultural analysis, original sin

The Renaissance, a revival of interest in ancient learning, marks the transition from the medieval to the modern world. The key developments took place from the fourteenth through the sixteenth centuries in the nuclear city-states of Western Europe, especially northern Italy. There, wealthy mercantilists and other members of the prospering middle class began to spend their money as “patrons” of artists and scientists who were unwilling to accept limits placed by the Church on their intellectual and creative freedom. The archetypical “Renaissance Man” was the Italian painter, sculptor, architect, musician, engineer, and mathematician Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519). Like other creative geniuses of the Renaissance, da Vinci was enamoured of the ancient world because it represented a pre-Christian source of knowledge and values. Curiosity about the ancient world also produced classical archaeology, which developed during the Renaissance as an effort to use classical artifacts to supplement what was written in classical texts. In Italy, the rediscovery of Roman antiquity was especially exhilarating because Rome was part of Italy’s own “glorious past.” Renaissance thinkers came to realize that the ancients possessed a fuller and more satisfying grasp of human nature than did the austere Christians of the Middle Ages.



FIGURE 1.1 Adam and Eve: This Renaissance engraving (1504) by Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528) depicts Adam and Eve being expelled from the Garden of Eden, an act of profound consequence in the Judeo-Christian account of human creation.

© Private Collection / Bridgeman Images.

Renaissance interest in the ancient world produced a new sense of time, which no longer seemed static but instead capable of producing change—change as dramatic as that represented by the difference between the ancient and medieval worlds. This realization led to a systematic contrast of ancient and medieval ways of life and, in turn, to a questioning of the authority of the medieval Catholic Church based on a preference for secular alternatives from the past. In the history of religion, this trend contributed to the Protestant reform movements of the sixteenth century, many of which stressed the “priesthood of all believers” and the importance of rationality in religious experience and practice. In the histories of humanism and science, the trend continued to broaden the secularization of thinking, paving the way for the emergence of the modern tradition of scholarly social criticism and analysis.

Three influential social critics and analysts inspired by the Renaissance outlook were Desiderius Erasmus (c. 1466–1536), Thomas More (1478–1535), and Niccolò Machiavelli (1469–1527). In *The Praise of Folly* (1509), the Dutchman Erasmus opposed the idea of **original sin**, arguing that Greek virtues incorporated into early Christianity were superior to virtues espoused by later Christianity, which had grown excessively formal, bureaucratic, and corrupt. His highly irreverent book poked fun at the perceived stupidity, greed, and hypocrisy of priests and monks. In *Utopia* (1516), the Englishman More contrasted the evils of contemporary society with the virtues of a society constructed on secular principles and based on ethnographic accounts of “simpler” peoples, whose lives were happier because they lacked private property, money, and crime. In *The Prince* (1513), the Italian Machiavelli described the qualities of an effective political ruler, who must be strong, intelligent, and wise enough to understand the good and bad parts of human nature. All three of these influential Renaissance thinkers show that by the early sixteenth century there had emerged a strong tradition of secular social analysis that later, in anthropology, would become **cross-cultural analysis**. An important Renaissance legacy to anthropology was this secular, critical approach. In the postmodern era, anthropology also revived some of its ties to Renaissance-inspired humanities.

Voyages of Geographical Discovery

Key Words: antipodes, monogenesis, natural children, natural slaves, Other, polygenesis

During the late Roman imperial period, Saint Augustine pronounced that “No antipodes exist.” **Antipodes** were places on opposite sides of the world, together with the people who lived there. In making this pronouncement, Augustine was expressing the view, widely held at the time, that most parts of the world had already been discovered and that nothing dramatically different remained to be found. He was mistaken. Between Roman and early modern times, enough geographical exploration had taken place to bring Europeans into contact with peoples sufficiently different from themselves as to raise the question of whether they were even human.

European exploration began in earnest with the eleventh-century Christian crusades to Africa and parts of the Middle East. Exploration expanded in the thirteenth century when the Mongols conquered much of the Holy Roman Empire in central and Eastern Europe. One of the most famous European explorers was the Venetian Marco Polo (c. 1254–c. 1324), who spent 17 years in China at the court of the Mongol ruler Kublai Khan. Intense competition for profitable trade routes to Asia spurred further exploration by Portugal and Spain. By 1499, Vasco da Gama (c. 1469–1524) found his way around Africa to India, while a few years earlier, in 1492, seeking the same destination, Christopher Columbus (c. 1446–1506) “discovered” the “New World.” When Vasco Núñez de Balboa (c. 1475–1517) sailed around South America and reached the Pacific Ocean in 1513, it became clear that the New World was in fact new (to Europeans). The first round of European exploration was concluded by Ferdinand Magellan (c. 1480–1521), one of whose ships circumnavigated the globe in 1522.



FIGURE 1.3 The Old World Meets the New: In this image, early-sixteenth-century Spanish soldiers are besieging the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlán.

TLAXCALA, Lienzo de. “The Burning of the Idols by Hernan Cortes.” Illustration from a facsimile of a Mexican Indian picture history of c. 1550, 1892 (colour engraving), Mexican School, 19th century. © Private Collection / Archives Charmet / Bridgeman Images.

Initially, European opinions of non-European Native peoples presented a major challenge to the medieval synthesis of God, people, and nature. To Europeans, the Native peoples, especially the “Indian” Natives of the New World, appeared extraordinarily different, far too primitive and savage to belong to a single family of God’s creation. Thomas Aquinas, who knew something about human diversity, had pronounced that Native peoples were

imperfect humans and, therefore, **natural slaves** to Europeans. At the time, this pronouncement seemed plausible, but problems with it quickly arose. Imperfect natural slaves lacked the mental and moral capacity for free agency, or the ability to make a conscious choice. Without free agency, Native peoples could not make a valid conversion to Christianity as a means of achieving salvation. Therefore, they were denied the kingdom of God, rendering the efforts of missionaries futile.

Christian theology had to change, and it did. The influential Spanish theologians Bartolomé de Las Casas (1474–1566) and José de Acosta (c. 1539–1600) redefined natural slaves as **natural children**, allowing benevolence to “save” them and make them civilized Christians. An important consequence of this redefinition, in theological terms, was to bring the human family closer together. But if all the peoples of the world were to belong to the same family, should they not be historically connected? The Protestant Reformation had made the Bible the sole authority on history for much of Christian Europe. A few biblical passages did imply historical connections among different peoples, for example, through Adam and Eve, the sons of Noah, and tribes dispersed after the destruction of the Tower of Babel. By and large, however, biblical support for the idea that *all* the peoples of the world were God’s children was scant and, in some circles, insufficient. Additional support was needed.

In the period from the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries, several ingenious schemes were designed to show that Europeans were historically connected to non-Europeans, especially to American Native peoples, with whom, following the colonization of America, Europeans were forced to interact. According to one scheme, Native peoples were descendants of survivors of the sunken continent of Atlantis, a relationship purportedly demonstrated by cultural similarities between Europeans and the Incas and Aztecs. Another scheme made Native peoples one of the ten Lost Tribes of Israel, while yet another, foreshadowing the modern scientific view, had them immigrating to America from northern Asia across the Bering Strait. Gradually, these schemes, inspired by the desire to reconcile natural observations with Christian theology, became more “scientific.” In anthropology, they led to **monogenesis**, the doctrine that human “races” constitute a single biological species with a common origin and physical differences produced by natural agents over time. Later, monogenesis faced stiff competition from **polygenesis**, the doctrine that human races constitute

distinct species with separate origins and physical differences that are unalterable and racially innate. Debate between monogenesisists and polygenesisists was at times intense, reaching its peak in the heyday of classical nineteenth-century anthropology. In the twentieth century, the use of the terms monogenesis and polygenesis declined, but anthropologists have continued to debate the significance of human physical similarities and differences.

No other event in Western history has been as significant for anthropology as the voyages of geographical discovery. These voyages brought Europeans into contact with the different kinds of people that anthropologists now study, creating what has been called the anthropological “**Other**.” They also launched the era of European global domination of Native peoples by means of slavery, colonialism, imperialism, and “globalization.” In the late twentieth century, anthropologists began to recognize their complicity in this domination and to agonize over ways to “decolonialize” anthropology and give Native peoples “voice.” This movement has had profound implications for anthropological theory.

The Scientific Revolution

Key Words: British empiricism, cosmology, deduction, dualism, epistemology, French rationalism, induction, law of universal gravitation, mechanics

A principal reason for the change of medieval into modern times was the Scientific Revolution, meaning the invention of modern science as a method of intellectual investigation and the growth of specialized sciences and their accumulated bodies of knowledge about the natural world. Because most anthropologists have embraced some version of science, contrasted with humanism or religion, anthropology today is rooted in these momentous events.

There are two parts to the Scientific Revolution: the growth of scientific epistemologies and the accumulation of scientific knowledge.

Epistemology is the branch of philosophy that explores the nature of knowledge. In the post-medieval era, when the intellectual authority of the Church was eroding, new epistemologies for science were required. Two major epistemologies emerged, both of which are employed by the practising scientist today. One is **deduction**, the use of logic to reason from general to particular statements, or, defined more broadly, the process of drawing a conclusion from something known or assumed. Deduction is used in all sciences, especially the formal science of mathematics. The most famous intellectual architect of deduction was the French mathematician René Descartes (1596–1650), who reasoned, “I exist, therefore God exists, therefore the real world exists.” The Cartesian (the adjective derived from Descartes) version of deduction laid the foundation for the scientific tradition of **French rationalism**. A central tenet of Cartesian thought, one that would become pivotal in late-twentieth-century critiques of positivism, is **dualism**, which assumes the essential duality of a world divided into objects and subjects, the rational and the irrational, and the cultural and the natural. Underlying this dualism is a sharp distinction between the realm of mind and the realm of matter.

The second epistemology of the Scientific Revolution is **induction**, the process of discovering general explanations for particular facts by weighing the observational evidence for propositions that make assertions about those

facts. The most famous intellectual architects of induction were the English philosophers Francis Bacon (1561–1626) and John Locke (1632–1704), whose ideas formed an important part of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment. Baconian and Lockean versions of induction laid the foundation for the scientific tradition of **British empiricism**. Both French rationalism and British empiricism have had followers in anthropology, leading to anthropological schools of thought with fundamentally different, and sometimes opposing, epistemologies.

From the thirteenth through the seventeenth centuries, increasingly powerful applications of scientific epistemologies supplanted medieval ways of thinking to produce a series of scientific discoveries culminating in the revolutionary scientific synthesis of Sir Isaac Newton. The story of this revolution begins with **mechanics**, the science of motion, and with **cosmology**, a branch of philosophy concerned with the origin and structure of the universe.

Medieval mechanics and cosmology derived from a combination of Christian theology and Aristotelian science. In the medieval world view, the Earth was the centre of the universe, and all bodies moved to its centre in a form of motion that was considered natural. All other motion was considered unnatural and needed a mover to be explained. In unnatural motion, if a body ceased being moved, it would stop, or come to rest. The speed of a moving body depended on the force of the mover, with a constant force producing a constant speed. When a moving body met resistance, its speed would decrease. If the resistance decreased, its velocity would increase proportionately so that, in a vacuum, where there is no resistance at all, its speed should be instantaneous. To medieval scientists, the concept of instantaneous speed seemed absurd. Therefore, there was no vacuum.

In this system, naturally falling bodies should not accelerate, but they did. The solution to this problem, devised by medieval commentators, was to posit that air rushed in behind falling bodies, forcing them downward. As the height of the air beneath falling bodies decreased, they met less resistance and accelerated. This solution worked well for a while, but then it became unconvincing. There was the added problem of projectiles, or bodies impelled forward through the air. Why did projectiles slow down? According to a theory developed in the 1300s, projectiles were given the property of *impetus*, which spent itself in flight. By the same token, naturally falling bodies *acquired* impetus, which made them accelerate. The theory of

impetus, a classic ad hoc explanation, was a bridge between medieval theories and the modern theory of inertia.

Medieval mechanics was an integral part of medieval cosmology. In medieval cosmology, the earthly domain was cut off from the celestial, or spiritual, domain by the four elements of earth, water, air, and fire, which covered the Earth in layered orbs, or spheres. The celestial orbs comprised a fifth element, something unchanging and eternal. There were ten celestial orbs, the outer one the empyrean heaven. Aristotle had proclaimed these orbs real, although frictionless. Ptolemy (87–150), the great Greek astronomer at Alexandria, was forced to add almost 80 additional orbs with epicycles, smaller circles moving around the circumference of larger circles, to account for “irregularities” in planetary motion. This solution created a major new problem: the orbs, supposedly real, intersected.

In 1543, the Polish astronomer Nicolaus Copernicus (1473–1543) helped launch the Scientific Revolution by announcing that the Earth moved around the Sun, not the other way around, and that the Earth revolved on its own axis. Copernicus intended his action, which reduced the number of required orbs to 34, to be conservative, bolstering the Ptolemaic system by salvaging elements of it that still worked. But the implications were ominous. If the Earth was not the centre of the universe, how could it be special? How could God have created it for the glorification of people? Were there other worlds? Moreover, this solution created new technical problems and was beset by new nonconforming observations. If the Earth was rotating on its axis, why did falling bodies not land *behind* where they were dropped? Also, in the late 1500s, new stars and comets appeared, and their paths of movement, especially those of the comets, cut through the celestial orbs. To solve this problem, the Danish astronomer Tycho Brahe (1546–1601) took the next bold step by announcing that the orbs did not exist. Then, in the early 1600s, the German astronomer Johann Kepler (1571–1630), freed from the constraints of orbs, described planetary orbits as ellipses rather than perfect circles. Kepler’s laws of planetary motion had planets moving around the Sun and sweeping equal areas in equal time, implying that planets closer to the Sun moved faster.

Meanwhile, the Italian physicist and astronomer Galileo Galilei (1564–1642) used the telescope to observe sunspots and other “blemishes” on heavenly bodies. Reflecting on the revolutionary views of his predecessors, Galileo, in *Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief Systems of the World* (1632),

systematically contrasted the Ptolemaic and Copernican world views. In the process, he solved the problem of falling bodies not landing behind where they were dropped by reasoning that everything on the Earth rotates with it; in other words, “behind” does not really exist. Still, two huge interrelated problems remained: what *caused* motion on Earth, now that the Earth was no longer the centre of the universe, and what *caused* celestial bodies to move, now that there were no orbs?

These remaining problems were solved by the British scientist Isaac Newton (1642– 1727), who, in *Principles of Mathematics* (1687), showed that one law, the **law of universal gravitation**, accounted for the motion of bodies both on the Earth and in the celestial realm. Newton showed that all bodies move by being attracted to one another with a force proportional to the square of the distance between them. Bodies on the Earth move because they are attracted to the Earth (and the Earth to them), and celestial bodies move because they are attracted to one another in patterns consistent with Kepler’s laws of planetary motion. Contrasted with the medieval system, Newton’s system maintains that inertia keeps bodies moving unless they are affected by new forces, rendering it unnecessary to keep bodies moving by constantly applying the same force. Moreover, a constant force produces constant acceleration, not speed. The Newtonian cosmos is one law-bound system of matter in motion, with the Earth and its inhabitants careening through empty space in a way that scientists do not have to invoke God to explain. For his intellectual achievements, Isaac Newton was knighted and, after his death, buried in Westminster Abbey. Many years later, Charles Darwin—“the Newton of biology”—was buried nearby.

The significance of the Scientific Revolution for anthropology is twofold. First, the physical universe conceived by Newton is the universe that most modern anthropologists accept. Second, Newton’s accomplishments in natural science inspired similar efforts in the social sphere. The result was that in the century following Newton, the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, the seeds of social science were planted, took root, and flourished. In the late twentieth century, however, many anthropologists began to question the efficacy of science, ushering in an era of self-doubt and, in some quarters, outright rejection of science as traditionally conceived. During that time, and continuing into the twenty-first century, the modern “Enlightenment Project” came under intense scrutiny.

The Enlightenment

Key Words: comparative method, culture, deistic, ethnocentric, mechanical philosophy, noble savagery, perfectibility, progress, reason, savagery/barbarism/civilization, theistic, universal historians

The Enlightenment is the name given to the intellectual history of Europe in the eighteenth century, from the time of Newton's *Principles of Mathematics* to the time of the French Revolution, beginning in 1789. During this period, following fast on the Scientific Revolution, intellectual attitudes coalesced to produce key concepts of social science. In anthropology, the most important of these concepts was culture.

In a way, the Enlightenment was a continuation of the Scientific Revolution because Enlightenment intellectuals were so enamoured of the philosophy of Newton that they extended it from the natural into the social realm. Newton's philosophy was called the **mechanical philosophy**, referring to his image of the universe as a complex machine with fine-tuned interacting parts. The machine was always moving, and the job of the scientist was to learn just how. Because Newton believed that God had created the universe, his philosophy was also called **deistic**; unlike a **theistic** philosopher, he did not invoke God to account for its day-to-day machinations. Metaphorically, the Newtonian universe was a clock, with God the clockmaker.

Another major figure in the Enlightenment was the British philosopher John Locke (1632–1704), who in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690) expanded the scientific epistemology of British empiricism. The most important part of Locke's epistemology for anthropology was his idea, resurrected from the ancient Stoics, that the mind of each newborn person is a *tabula rasa*, or "blank slate," which is "written on" by life. This philosophy was so important because it was a philosophy of experience, in which human thoughts and behaviour were understood to be acquired rather than inherited or in some other way innate. Such an understanding was indispensable for the emergence of the concept of **culture**, which can be defined here as the accumulated way of living created and acquired by people and transmitted from one generation to another extrasomatically, that is, other than through genes. Culture is the central

concept of American anthropology. Its emergence during the Enlightenment is the reason for the American anthropologist Marvin Harris's argument, in *The Rise of Anthropological Theory* (1968), that before the Enlightenment anthropology did not really exist.

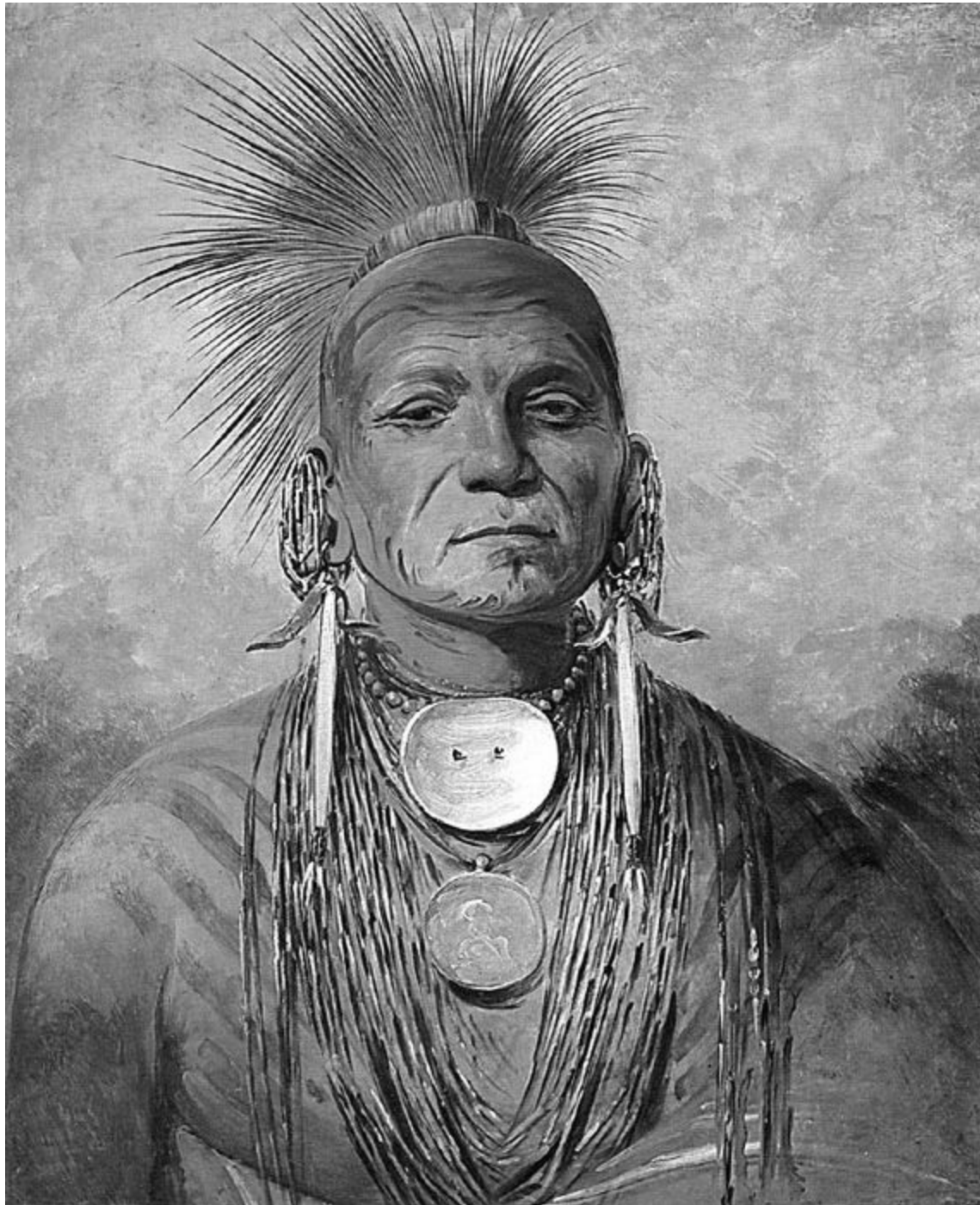


FIGURE 1.4 Noble Savage: This 1844–45 portrait by American artist George Catlin (1796–1872) shows Iowa medicine man See-Non-Ty-A in full regalia.

Paul Mellon Collection (1965.16.346). Courtesy of the National Gallery of Art, Washington.

During the Enlightenment, a number of intellectuals used the philosophies of Newton and Locke to organize and analyze data on human diversity generated by the voyages of geographical discovery. One such intellectual was the Jesuit Father Joseph Lafitau (1671–1746), who in *Customs of American Savages Compared with Those of Earliest Times* (1724) created an inventory of culture traits and categories considerably less **ethnocentric**, or culturally biased, than those of his predecessors. Lafitau was one of several Jesuit missionaries whose eighteenth-century accounts of North American Native peoples are still consulted by ethnohistorians. Another Enlightenment figure was the French social reformer Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–78), who in *Discourse on the Origin and Foundation of Inequality among Men* (1751) speculated on how and why human differences had developed over time. Rousseau sought to counteract what he considered to be overly intellectualized Enlightenment formulations by emphasizing human pathos and emotion. His speculations led him to conclude in *The Social Contract* (1762) that humanity had been happier in the past and that **noble savagery** was a condition whose disappearance ought to be lamented. In their speculative reconstructions of the past, both Lafitau and Rousseau used living Native peoples as models for past “savages.” This was an early application of what in nineteenth-century anthropology would be called the **comparative method**.

Emulating the accomplishments of Newton, some Enlightenment intellectuals sought to discover “laws” of human history. These so-called **universal historians** proposed stages of human development during which, according to the philosophy of Locke, human experience was understood to have accumulated as culture. A prime example was the Italian philosopher Giambattista Vico (1668–1744), who in *The New Science* (1725) described how humanity had passed through the three stages of gods, heroes, and men. These stages were secular and, according to Vico, the product of human, not divine, action. Another universal historian was the Baron de la Brède et de Montesquieu (1689–1755), commonly known simply as Montesquieu, who in *The Spirit of Laws* (1748) attempted to show how rules governing human conduct have always been correlated with culture. More radical was French philosopher François-Marie Arouet, better known by his nom de plume Voltaire (1694–1778). In his *Essay on the Customs and Spirit of Nations* (1745), Voltaire actively attacked the theological view of history and traced the growth of Christianity in secular terms. The British historian Edward

Gibbon (1737–94) used the same approach more subtly in *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776–78).

Some universal historians of the Enlightenment stand out as more recognizably anthropological than others. One was the French statesman Anne Robert Jacques Turgot (1727–81), who in *Plans for Two Discourses on Universal History* (1750) described the passage of humanity through the three stages of hunting, pastoralism, and farming. Another was the French philosopher Marie Jean de Condorcet (1743–94), who in *Sketch for a Historical Picture of the Prosgress of the Human Mind* (1795) added more stages, for a total of ten, the last of which he predicted to be the future. Prediction, he urged, was based on his confidence in laws about the past. The Scottish historians Adam Ferguson (1728–1816), John Millar (1735–1801), and William Robertson (1721–93) stressed the importance of technology and economy in defining stages of universal history. Robertson even used the schema of **savagery, barbarism, and civilization**, which became commonplace in the nineteenth century. In fact, from the perspective of nineteenth-century anthropology, the Scottish Enlightenment appears more theoretically sophisticated than the French.

Enlightenment schemes of universal history were united by the common ideals of human **reason, progress, and perfectibility**. Reason referred to the exercise of human intellect unfettered by authoritarian faith, including faith in religion. Progress referred to the resulting positive direction of historical change, opposite to the direction presupposed by medieval Christianity, which considered humanity degenerate and fallen from the grace of God. Perfectibility referred to the final outcome of reason and progress, which, according to Enlightenment thinkers, would lead to steady improvement of human conditions on Earth. Linked as it was to science, the intellectual agenda of the Enlightenment prevailed in anthropology for more than 100 years. In the earlier twentieth century, influential anthropological theorists began to question some of its ideals as unattainable, and in the later twentieth century, other influential theorists offered a more strident critique of those ideals as undesirable. Meanwhile, toward the end of the eighteenth century, the ideals became slogans for social reform, and then rallying cries for the French Revolution.

The Rise of Positivism

Key Words: bourgeoisie, pietistic, positivism, Positivism, social dynamics, social statics, *Volksgeist*

The French Revolution was a political movement that overthrew the absolute monarchy of the Bourbon regime and its associated system of upper-class privilege, unleashing a new middle class, the **bourgeoisie**. Beginning in 1789, the Revolution lasted for a protracted, bloody decade before Napoleon Bonaparte (1769–1821) assumed control of France in 1799. In a move widely considered to be a betrayal of revolutionary ideals, Bonaparte made himself emperor and plunged France into a series of expansionist wars that lasted until he was defeated at the Battle of Waterloo in 1815. Afterward, all of Europe needed a rest from political turmoil.

The Revolution was fought on the basis of Enlightenment ideals that insisted on the human capacity for moral and intellectual progress and, ultimately, perfection. When the Revolution turned out badly, European intellectuals turned their backs on these ideals. The result was a rise in conservative attitudes aimed at maintaining, or regaining, the political status quo. Conservatism appeared in a number of guises. One was fundamentalist Christianity, which condemned social science as excessively materialistic, atheistic, and amoral. Many new Christian denominations developed, espousing “evangelical” or **pietistic** perspectives. In this new theology, Newton’s clockmaker God was replaced by a God of divine intervention, miracles, and punishment for those who strayed from the teachings of the Bible and its latter-day interpretations. Elsewhere, citizens fed up with radical “social engineering” established utopian, or visionary, socialist communities where they could live and do as they pleased. A strong reaction to Napoleon’s vision of empire was nationalism, which promoted the ideology and mythology of particular peoples rather than a universal outlook on humankind. In Germany, which struggled to achieve nationhood, there was a revival of faith in predestination and a longing to return to past glory, resulting in a retreat from the idea of progress. This development had a noticeable effect on German ethnology, which embraced the idea of the **Volksgeist**, or special spirit, of Germans. Another guise of conservatism was Romanticism, a movement in art, literature, and even science that glorified

the idiosyncratic, non-rational, and emotional sides of human nature and denied the primacy of Cartesian thought. Finally, there was racism, which was linked to all other guises of conservatism and which flourished in the nineteenth century.

Conservatism also affected social science, which developed during the Enlightenment when principles of Newtonian science were used to investigate social change. In the early nineteenth century, social scientists also felt that it was time to put more emphasis on stability. The result was the all-encompassing philosophy of **Positivism**.

Positivism (with a capital “P”) was the creation of the French philosopher Auguste Comte (1798–1857), an intellectual descendant of Marie Jean de Condorcet through the intermediary Claude Henri, Comte de Saint-Simon (1760–1825). Comte’s views are contained in his multivolume work *Course of Positive Philosophy* (1830–42), in which he described how almost all branches of knowledge have passed through three stages: theological, metaphysical, and positive. According to Comte, in the theological stage, phenomena were explained in terms of deities; in the metaphysical stage, in terms of abstract concepts; and in the positive stage, in terms of other phenomena. Starting with astronomy and physics in the Scientific Revolution, the natural sciences had already passed through the theological and metaphysical stages to become positive, meaning truly scientific. The social sciences, however, lagged behind. Comte took it upon himself to help them catch up. The social sciences had already passed out of the theological stage, where social phenomena had been explained in terms of God during the Middle Ages, well into the metaphysical stage, where they had been explained in terms of the abstract concept of reason during the Enlightenment. Now, Comte urged, social science should enter the positive phase in the post-Enlightenment nineteenth century.

In Comte’s scheme, science involved the search for generalizations. In positive social science, these would be two kinds. **Social dynamics** (named after a branch of physics) would search for generalizations about social change, while **social statics** (physics again) would search for generalizations about social stability. Comte maintained that the French Revolution had gone too far in attempting to promote dynamic change and that its excesses needed to be tempered with social statics. Together, social dynamics and social statics offered a comprehensive scientific perspective on social phenomena.

As the creator of Positivism, Comte was one of the founding fathers of modern social science, in particular sociology, which was built on the foundation of his pronouncement that social phenomena are to be explained in their own terms. At the same time, **positivism** (with a small “p”) underwent several philosophical transformations, so that by the middle of the twentieth century it had become synonymous with an outlook that promoted detached, value-free science as the model for social-scientific inquiry. By the end of the century, anthropologists of various persuasions had begun to realize that, far from being detached, science is permeated by values, even if those values are not always explicit. They had also begun to understand how science functions in a social context and to argue that scientists bear responsibility for the detrimental social uses of science. Opposed to the traditional scientific model, these anthropologists began to cite positivism as a source of theoretical misguidance.

Marxism

Key Words: capitalism, communist revolution, dialectical materialism, dictatorship of the proletariat, idealist, labour theory of value, Marxism, materialism, means of production, primitive communism, proletariat, ruling class, thesis-antithesis-synthesis, vulgar materialists

As the nineteenth century progressed, in the wake of the French Revolution, the middle classes of Europe prospered. Meanwhile, the working classes grew restless and agitated for reform. Where the Industrial Revolution took hold, mainly in Britain, radical intellectuals rallied to support the growing labour movement. The most radical of these were Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, co-creators of the theory of **dialectical materialism**, commonly called **Marxism**. Marxism has had a profound effect on the real world of politics. It has also affected anthropology, not only for this reason but also because aspects of Marx's thought have been elaborated and formally incorporated within anthropological theory, even by anthropologists whose "allegiance" is not explicitly Marxist.

Karl Marx (1818–83) was born in Prussia (now part of northern Germany), studied philosophy at the University of Berlin, and then studied law at the University of Bonn. He became interested in the relationship between politics and economics, turning to the utopian variety of socialism in 1843. Early on, he decided that utopian socialism was ineffective and that, to become effective, socialism would have to be made "scientific." Friedrich Engels (1820–95) was the son of a German textile manufacturer who spent several years in the English cities of Manchester and Liverpool as the agent of a textile firm. England had already experienced the undesirable effects of industrialization and was debating parliamentary measures to improve the poor conditions of urban workers. Engels analyzed these conditions in *The Condition of the Working Class in England* (1844) and then expanded his analysis in collaboration with Marx. The result was their landmark treatise *The Communist Manifesto* (1848).

The essential ingredients of dialectical materialism can be found in *The Communist Manifesto* and the much larger work *Capital* (1867). Marx and Engels began with the premise of **materialism**, meaning their belief that human existence determines human consciousness, contrasted with the

idealist belief that human consciousness determines human existence. More specifically, they believed that human thoughts, actions, and institutions are determined by their relationship to the means of production, meaning how people make a living in the material world. This relationship is always changing because the **means of production** themselves are always changing as people adapt to their physical conditions. In prehistory, according to Marx and Engels, who drew this part of their analysis from contemporary anthropology, people lived in a socioeconomic system with material goods belonging to all, no private property, and equality under the “law.” In civilization, however, powerful individuals gained control of land, the basic source of wealth. Thus, **primitive communism** was superseded by a system of unequal classes and the exploitation of one class by another.



FIGURE 1.5 Machine over Man: This classic image from Charlie Chaplin's 1936 Depression-era film *Modern Times* depicts the exploitation of factory workers that was the focus of the Marxist theory of dialectical materialism.

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Marx and Engels maintained that all modern societies are based on class distinctions. These distinctions become institutionalized in Church and State, which function to keep the **ruling class**, the class that controls the means of production, in power. As the means of production change, the nature of classes, which “organize” the means of production, also changes. Eventually, the means of production outgrow their form of organization, which is “overthrown” in a social revolution from which a new social system emerges. In classical Marxism, the sequence of social revolutions is dialectical, according to a revised version of the philosophy of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich

Hegel (1770–1831). Hegel, an extreme idealist, described a world spirit manifesting itself in history through dialectical transformations of the form **thesis-antithesis-synthesis**. The thesis came first, followed by its opposite, the antithesis, which was then followed by a combination of the thesis and antithesis, the synthesis. Marx and Engels were attracted to Hegel's philosophy but felt that it needed to be epistemologically upended. Therefore, they “stood Hegel on his head” and moved the dialectic from the ideal to the material world. In the resulting theory of dialectical materialism, social transformations assume a dialectical form, with one social stage, the thesis, inevitably “sowing the seeds of its own destruction” by harbouring its opposite, the antithesis, which manifests itself in social revolution. This stage is followed by a third social stage, the synthesis, which retains elements of the preceding two. Marx and Engels's main focus was materialism rather than dialectics. Their primary interest in revising Hegel's philosophy was to use it to explain what had happened in world history and, through a **communist revolution**, what would happen in the future.

Although Marx and Engels were aware of prehistory, ancient history, and non-Western history, they began their account with the Middle Ages and feudalism, a system of agricultural economics with classes consisting of ruling-class lords and a ruled class of unfree labourers, the serfs. During feudal times, a new manufacturing class emerged, the capitalists, whose power rested on money rather than land. The capitalist means of production was manufacturing, which, because of what it could produce, was superior to agriculture and eventually replaced it. For Marx and Engels, the triumph of **capitalism** over feudalism was the French Revolution, after which lords and serfs were superfluous, and the new classes became the ruling-class bourgeoisie and a ruled class of urban workers, the **proletariat**.

Marx and Engels did not spend too much time analyzing feudalism and how it gave rise to capitalism. They were much more anxious to analyze capitalism and how it would give rise to communism. Their analysis was based on the **labour theory of value**, the materialist premise that goods and services should be valued in terms of the human labour required to produce them. According to this theory, the value of a good or service, a commodity, is directly related to the amount of labour put into it. Exploitation occurs when capitalists “expropriate” some of this value as profit. Moreover, capitalists buy and sell labour itself as a commodity, valuing it according to wages determined by the labour “market.” The result is that workers are

alienated from the product of their labour and, therefore, from themselves.

The disintegration of capitalism was the focus of the work *Capital*. In it, Marx explained how at first capitalism was progressive, opening up new markets as an efficient way of producing goods. But capitalism became regressive and less efficient, as competition among manufacturers decreased and economic power was concentrated in fewer and fewer hands. The growth of monopolies was inevitable, Marx observed, because competition produced winners as well as losers. Soon the monopoly system outgrew the original capitalist system of product diversity. Rich monopolists got richer by increasing profits, and poor workers got poorer because profit was taken from their wages. The proletariat became pauperized, and, as small business people were squeezed out by competition, they swelled its ranks. Under free-market conditions, a glut of labourers caused a decrease in wages, intensifying poverty. Because of cheaper labour, profits increased. For a while, profits were reinvested in production, but eventually production generated more and more goods able to be bought by fewer and fewer people. This downward spiral of events led to economic recession, depression, and labour unrest. Soon the capitalist world was ripe for revolution.

In the mature phase of capitalism, the means of production would already be concentrated in a few locations. Workers could easily seize them in the name of the proletariat and nationalize them in the name of a nation governed by workers. The first stage of the revolution would be a temporary **dictatorship of the proletariat**, whose job would be to destroy the bourgeoisie as a class and eliminate private profit by putting it to public use. The result would be a classless society in which the state, formerly serving the interests of a few capitalists, would become agents of all workers. Eventually, the state would “wither away” and the final stage would emerge, the true stage of communism, in which workers would work according to their ability and receive compensation according to their needs. Final communism would represent a return to primitive communism with the technology of the industrial age.

Marxism achieved major political victories in the Soviet and Chinese revolutions of the twentieth century, which led to the installation of Marxist dogma and its modification by powerful politicians such as Vladimir Lenin (1870–1924), Joseph Stalin (1879–1953), and Mao Zedong (1893–1976). Marxism also took root outside politics in academic disciplines such as anthropology.

Beginning in earnest in the 1930s, a minority of anthropologists embraced one or more of the tenets of Marxism. A few turned to Marxism in support of the fledgling communist regime in the Soviet Union, or in rejection of the capitalist system held responsible for the Great Depression. Since then, Marxist anthropologists have grown theoretically diverse and sometimes divergent. Some, such as structural Marxists and political economists, have stressed how a given economic system is constrained by its ruling ideology. Others, such as some feminist anthropologists, have looked to Marxism as a means of understanding and combating the economic subjugation of women. Few Marxist anthropologists have accepted the entire theory of dialectical materialism, which history has helped refute. But they have demonstrated a personal commitment to help economically disadvantaged people and have been willing to use anthropology professionally for that purpose. Most Marxist anthropologists, including Marxist archaeologists, have preferred materialist over idealist explanations of culture change and historical over ahistorical approaches to cultural analysis. They have emphasized “class” because Marxism implies that different classes have different ideologies and “consciousnesses.” In Marxist circles there have been disputes between so-called **vulgar materialists**, said by their detractors to be simple-minded materialists, and Marxist anthropologists who have embraced one form or another of dialectics. This latter group includes the structural Marxists, who blend classical Marxism with the twentieth-century anthropology of Claude Lévi-Strauss. Marxist anthropologists, vulgar and structural alike, join forces in criticizing anthropologists who promote “value-free” science—so-called positivist anthropologists. All science, they say, is value-laden, and those who deny this truth, naïvely or intentionally, perpetuate social inequities.



FIGURE 1.6 United States Senator Joseph McCarthy, 1954: Recalling McCarthyism, or Senator McCarthy's campaign against communism, reminds us that it was risky to espouse Marxist views in the United States during the Cold War.

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In the era of the Cold War, the period of intense antagonism between the United States and the Soviet Union following World War II, several Marxist and other politically left-leaning anthropologists came under scrutiny by the American government. Anthropologist David Price probes this episode in a range of books, including *Anthropological Intelligence: The Deployment and Neglect of American Anthropology in the Second World War* (2008) and *Weaponizing Anthropology: Social Science in Service of the Militarized State* (2011). Citing documents obtained under the Freedom of Information Act, Price shows how in the early 1950s, using secret informants, the Federal

Bureau of Investigation (FBI) compiled a dossier on University of Michigan anthropologist Leslie White. Meanwhile, anthropologist Melville Jacobs was forced to appear before the Washington State House Un-American Activities Committee, and anthropologist Gene Weltfish, who lost her job at Columbia University, was forced to testify before Senator Joseph McCarthy's Committee on Government Operations. According to Price, these and other such anthropologists came under suspicion less for their possible (or actual) membership in the Communist Party than for their "radical" politics and social activism, which were aimed at correcting the perceived social inequities of capitalism.

Price asserts that in 1951, Frederick Johnson and William W. Howells, respectively the executive secretary and the president of the American Anthropological Association, sponsored a proposal, approved by the Association's Executive Board, to have the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) compile a comprehensive roster of Association members, identifying their areas of cultural, linguistic, and geographical expertise. On the questionnaire designed to elicit this information, the involvement of the CIA was kept secret. Such an action would probably be unthinkable today, but at the time, the attitude of American anthropologists toward government espionage was more favourable. Just a few years earlier, during World War II, American anthropologists had worked willingly, even enthusiastically, with the government to help defeat fascist Germany and Japan, and during both world wars, American archaeologists patriotically provided cover for government intelligence-gathering projects overseas. This whole shadowy wartime era, when the government "spied" on anthropologists and anthropologists spied for the government, gives pause for thought during the twenty-first century "War on Terror," including in the context of the controversy surrounding anthropologists' participation in the United States army's Human Terrain System (HTS) counter-insurgency programme (2007–15). Political reaction to President Barack Obama's 2015 initiative to normalize political relations with Cuba shows that anti-communist sentiment in America remains strong.

Classical Cultural Evolutionism

Key Words: adhesions, ancestor worship, anima, armchair anthropologist, classical cultural evolutionism, classificatory, consanguine, contract societies, cross-cousins, descriptive, evolution, exogamy, female infanticide, informant, matrilineal, monotheism, neo-evolutionists, patrilineal, polyandry, polytheism, prehistory, shamans, status societies, survivals, sympathetic magic, transigrate, unilineal kinship systems

The word **evolution** means transformation of forms, a process in which something changes while remaining partially the same. Evolution is associated most closely with biology, but it can also apply to any natural or social science attempting to reconstruct the past. The Marxist theory of dialectical materialism and the Enlightenment schemes of universal history were evolutionary. So was the first major cultural anthropological “-ism”: the **classical cultural evolutionism** of the nineteenth century.

Classical cultural evolutionism represents a continuation of Enlightenment universal historicism—with one important difference. While eighteenth-century universal historians concentrated on modern Western history, nineteenth-century cultural evolutionists concentrated on the history of non-Western peoples in **prehistory**, the time before writing. This difference derived from expanded ethnographic understanding of Native peoples and convincing new archaeological evidence that there was a prehistory. Taken together, ethnography and archaeology allowed nineteenth-century anthropologists to construct cultural evolutionary schemes in which descriptions of prehistoric artifacts were “fleshed out” with descriptions of present-day “primitive” peoples whose artifacts looked similar. This use of ethnography to supplement archaeology was called the “comparative method.” In the early twentieth century, influential anthropologists criticized the comparative method as too speculative, and cultural evolutionism fell out of favour as an anthropological theory. In the late 1940s, it was revived by another group of anthropologists who called themselves **neo-evolutionists** and labelled their nineteenth-century predecessors “classical.”

The heyday of classical cultural evolutionism was the period from the 1860s through the 1890s. Although this followed the publication of Charles Darwin’s *On the Origin of Species* (1859), cultural evolutionism does *not*

represent an application of Darwin's biological ideas to the realm of culture. Cultural evolutionists were far more interested in ethnography, archaeology, and an expanded view of universal history than in Darwin's theory of evolution by natural selection. It would be historically inaccurate to label cultural evolutionists "social" or "cultural" Darwinists.

Classical cultural evolutionists fell into "major" and "minor" categories. Major figures were more original, influential, and productive as authors. Minor figures published less, had less influence, and commented more on the ideas of others. The major classical cultural evolutionists were Herbert Spencer (1820–1903), John Lubbock (1834–1913), Lewis Henry Morgan (1818–81), Edward Burnett Tylor (1832–1917), and James Frazer (1854–1941). Minor classical cultural evolutionists included Henry Maine (1822–88), Johann Bachofen (1815–87), and John McLennan (1827–81). With the exception of Bachofen, a German, and Morgan, an American, all of them were British. The effect of their work was to reinforce the prevailing attitude of smug Victorian superiority by demonstrating how modern civilization had evolved from primitive cultures in the direction of "progress."

These classical cultural evolutionists were interested in an array of cultural institutions and beliefs. One group, led by Morgan, was interested in marriage, family, and sociopolitical organization. Another group, led by Tylor, was interested in religion, magic, and other ideological systems. With the exception of Spencer, a philosopher or sociologist more than an anthropologist, and Lubbock, an archaeologist as much as a cultural anthropologist, the classical cultural evolutionists "specialized" in one or the other of these interest groups.

Lewis Henry Morgan, an unlikely candidate for future anthropological fame, grew up in and around Rochester, New York, where he later practised law. He belonged to a fraternal order known as the League of the Iroquois and, in order to authenticate the order's rituals, began to study nearby Iroquois tribes, eventually becoming adopted by them and helping them press their Native land-claims cases in court. In his studies, Morgan relied heavily on his bilingual Native assistant Ely Parker (1828–95), probably the first significant **informant** in the history of American ethnography. Morgan took a keen interest in kinship, the study of how people are related to one another formally. This interest led to his first major book, *League of the Ho-de-no-sau-nee, or Iroquois* (1851), a study of Iroquois social organization. He expanded his studies with information gathered from travels throughout the

United States and Canada and from responses to questionnaires distributed around the world by the Smithsonian Institution. This information was incorporated into his more comprehensive books, *Systems of Consanguinity and Affinity of the Human Family* (1870) and his magnum opus *Ancient Society* (1877).

In *Ancient Society*, Morgan presented a vast scheme of cultural evolution on several interrelated levels. He began with the general stages of savagery, barbarism, and civilization, defined—somewhat inconsistently—as stages of hunting and gathering, plant and animal domestication, and “the state.” Each of these stages was divided—again somewhat inconsistently—into substages of “lower,” “middle,” and “upper.” Morgan recognized that there were two kinship types. The classificatory type lumped together kinship categories that Anglo-Americans split into two or more categories, using, for example, a single term for “brother” and “brother’s children.” The descriptive type, exemplified by Anglo-Americans, maintained such split categories. Morgan believed that the **classificatory** type of kinship had predominated during savagery and barbarism, and then evolved into the **descriptive** type with the advent of civilization, when property superseded kinship as the main determinant of social relations. Groups still practising classificatory kinship were said to be carry-overs from the savage or barbaric stage.

Morgan divided kinship types into kinship systems, beginning with the Malayan system, where “mother” and “father” were lumped with “mother” and “mother’s brother.” According to Morgan, the Malayan system evolved into the Turanian-Ganowanian, or Iroquoian, system when **cross-cousins**, cousins related through parents of the opposite sex, became distinguished. Then, when social relations reckoned through descent superseded social relations based on distinctions between the sexes, there evolved **unilineal kinship systems** of sibs, clans, and tribes. At first, still in the stage of savagery, descent was reckoned through the female line because, owing to pregnancy, female parenthood could be determined more reliably than male parenthood. In the stage of barbarism, however, kinship reckoning through the male line commenced, changing matrisibs, matriclans, and **matrilineal** tribes into patrisibs, patriclans, and **patrilineal** tribes. Male kinship became even more important in the stage of civilization. To all these stages, kinship types, and kinship systems Morgan added family types, beginning with the **consanguine** type, which is based on group marriage between brothers and sisters, and evolving through a series of prohibitions of marriage between

relatives into the monogamous nuclear family of civilized times.

A pivotal part of Morgan's scheme was his belief that a fundamental cultural shift occurred in the transition from the prehistoric stage of barbarism into the stage of civilization, which he characterized by writing, cities, monumental architecture, and other anthropological hallmarks of states (contrasted with bands, tribes, and chiefdoms). For Morgan, this shift occurred when, because of the demands of plant and animal domestication in cities, territorial relations became more important than kinship relations. The growth of private property at the expense of community property prompted certain privileged groups to retain private property by inheritance through the male line. This shift in turn led to the emergence of stratified social classes whose access to strategic material resources was unequal. Thus, beginning in antiquity, the stage of civilization became fundamentally different from the preceding stages of savagery and barbarism. Moreover, like other cultural evolutionists, Morgan considered present-day primitive cultures to be vestiges of the prehistoric past.

When Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels read *Ancient Society*, they were excited to find in it anthropological support for their belief that class-based inequalities were not engrained in human nature and that, under certain circumstances, a more egalitarian political system could work. They set about using Morgan's scheme to augment the theory of dialectical materialism by showing how the institution of private property had originated and how, when it was abolished, the world would return, at least figuratively, to the communism with which humanity had begun. When Marx died, Engels completed the task. In his book *Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State* (1884), Engels added Morgan to the select group of non-Marxists whose thoughts had been declared compatible with the Marxist cause.

Although partially dated, the body of Morgan's work has endured, and most modern anthropologists consider him to be the father of kinship studies. His nineteenth-century contemporaries disputed certain points. Differences between Morgan and minor classical cultural evolutionists centred on the sequence of cultural stages and the causes of their transformations. Morgan proposed a general evolutionary sequence of group marriage, or marriage ungoverned by complex kinship, followed by kinship determined through matrilineal and patrilineal descent. In *Ancient Law* (1861), Henry Maine disagreed, arguing that the first form of family was patrilineal. Maine also added an evolutionary distinction between **status societies**, which were

family-oriented, held property in common, and maintained social control by social sanctions, and **contract societies**, which stressed individualism, held property in private, and maintained social control by legal sanctions. In *Primitive Marriage* (1865), John McLennan agreed with Morgan that group marriage had preceded patrilineal descent but disagreed with him on how the transition from one to the other had occurred. According to McLennan, group marriage was a period of great struggle in which not everybody who was born could survive. This situation led to **female infanticide**, the preferential killing of female over male children. The resulting shortage of females meant that they had to share males as mates, leading to **polyandry**. Males also captured females from other groups, leading to **exogamy**, or “mating out.” In *Mother Right* (1861), Johann Bachofen made similar arguments. Judged by modern standards, all of these schemes were excessively speculative, far beyond the ability of empirical evidence to determine.

Morgan’s British counterpart was Edward Burnett Tylor, the “father” of cultural anthropology in Britain and, some say, in the West. Tylor was a prototypical Victorian **armchair anthropologist**, who based his evolutionary schemes on reason as much as on ethnographic and archaeological data. In reconstructing culture, he correlated cultural components, called **adhesions**, and looked for clues to the past in cultural vestiges, called **survivals**. He argued vigorously against the Christian idea of human degeneration, arguing instead in favour of the secular Victorian idea of human progress. Tylor is credited with a number of important anthropological “firsts.” He became the first academic professor of anthropology, at Oxford University in 1884; he wrote the first anthropology textbook, *Anthropology* (1881); and, in *Primitive Culture* (1871), he offered the first definition of culture by a professional anthropologist: “[that] complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.”

Tylor’s principal interest was the evolution of magico-religious beliefs and institutions, which he explained as the accumulation of rational answers to reasonable questions about the natural world. This approach was also taken by John Lubbock, who in *The Origin of Civilization* (1870) outlined a scheme for the evolution of magic and religion. Lubbock’s scheme began with atheism, the belief in no deity, and ended with the belief in an omnipotent, or all-powerful, God. Evolutionary philosopher Herbert Spencer, author of *Principles of Sociology* (1876), took a similar approach to the evolution of

magic and religion. A synthesis of Tylor's and Spencer's views can serve to illustrate the role of reason in this group of classical cultural evolutionists.

In the Tylor–Spencer synthesis, religion, or proto-religion, began when the earliest prehistoric people tried to solve natural puzzles. Prehistoric people might have observed, for example, that clouds appear and disappear and the sun rises and sets, while rocks fail to move. Why were some natural objects animated and others not? The answer was that animated objects possessed **anima**, an invisible and diffuse supernatural force. Organisms were particularly animated, so their anima must have been especially powerful. Human organisms were animated in curious ways. In dreams, for example, people experienced themselves in different places, and then awoke to find themselves somewhere else. People cannot be physically present in more than one place at the same time, so, the reasoning went, they must have two dimensions, a physical dimension and a non-physical, or spiritual, dimension, which “travels.” This spiritual dimension became the “soul.” Observations on death served to confirm the existence of souls. When people die, initially they look the same as in life, but they are no longer animated. Therefore, their invisible souls must have departed. But where do souls go? Many never return, so they must gather in another world, the “afterlife.” Other souls return to haunt and possess the living as “ghosts.” Therefore, these ghost-souls, some good and others bad, must be able to **transmigrate**.

If souls survive after death, should they not be open to postmortem “conversation”? In the Tylor–Spencer synthesis, contacting souls became the job of magico-religious specialists such as sorcerers and **shamans**. Furthermore, in a non-literate and kin-based culture, souls would be reckoned as ancestors and venerated for their wisdom and advice, leading to **ancestor worship**. But how was the supernatural world of ancestral ghost-souls to be imagined? According to the synthesis, it could be imagined only as a reflection of life on Earth, and, when culture evolved, images of the afterlife would evolve in tandem. For this reason, in prehistoric and primitive cultures, with multiple, equally ranking lineages and clans, there would be multiple, equally ranking ghost-souls revered as deities—**polytheism**. When, in civilization, culture became class-based and stratified, deities became ranked; and when, early in civilization, authority came to rest in the hands of a single pharaoh, emperor, or priestly king, the number of deities shrank to one, for instance, the omnipotent “King of Kings” of Christianity. In this way, “advanced” **monotheism**, the prevailing form of religion in Victorian Britain,

was the end product of a series of cultural transformations starting with primitive animism at the beginning of prehistoric time—the idea of “progress.”

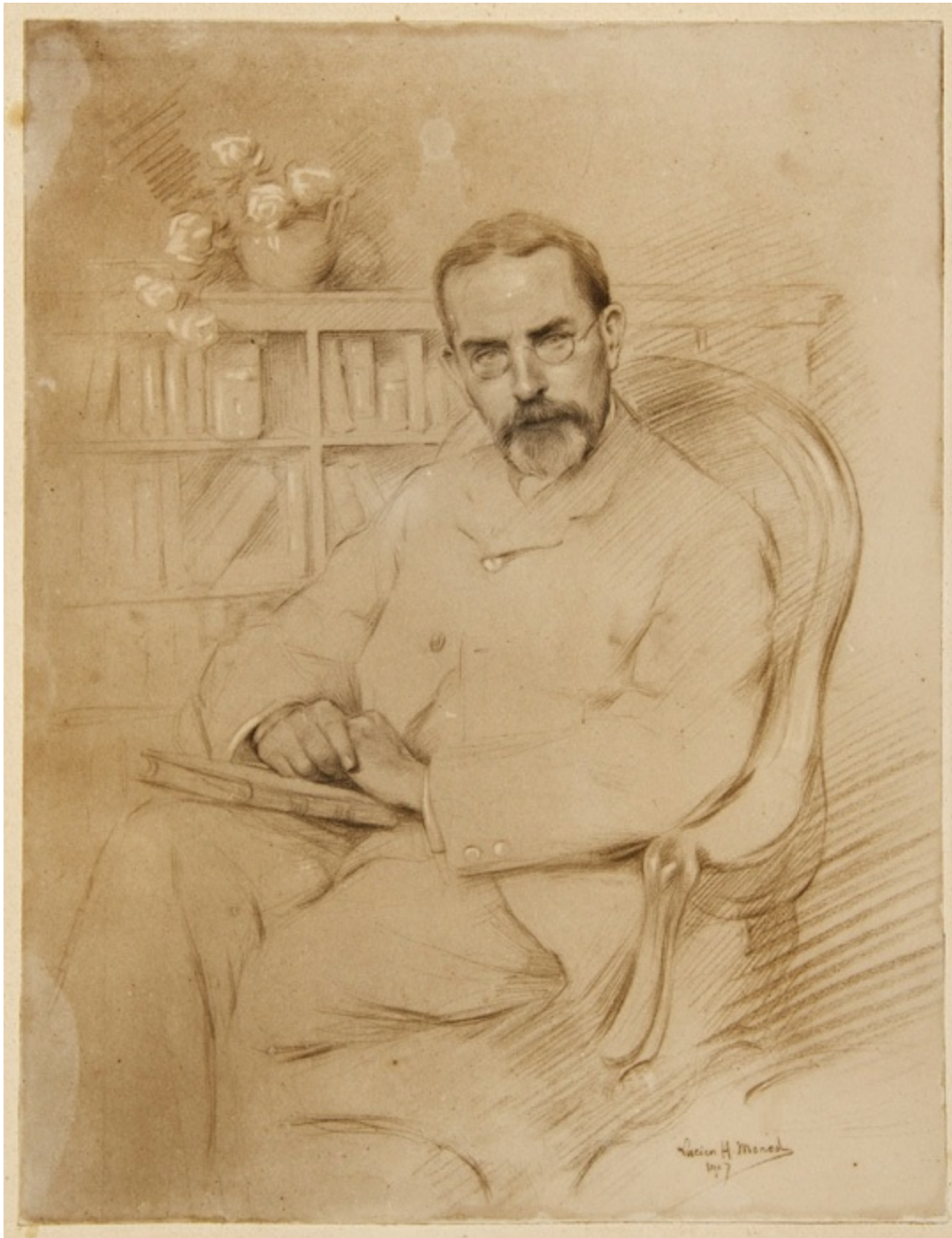


FIGURE 1.7 Sir James Frazer (1854–1941): The distinguished late- Victorian cultural evolutionist sits in his armchair.

MONOD, Lucien Hector. "Sir James George." Pencil on paper, 1907. © Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford, UK / Bridgeman Images.

Evolution results in continuity as well as change. In biological evolution, *Homo sapiens* retains traits of ancestral species, including pre-human species with ape-like and monkey-like traits. For many people, the suggestion that humanity is even partially animalistic provokes a visceral, negative reaction. Likewise, in Victorian Britain, cultural evolutionists such as Tylor and Spencer were criticized and became controversial when they suggested that Christianity, like the beliefs of people everywhere, had “primitive” roots. Anthropology has had a somewhat radical reputation ever since.

The remaining major classical cultural evolutionist was James Frazer, whose multivolume work *The Golden Bough* (1890) was a cross-cultural compendium of myths, folklore, and literature. Like Tylor, Frazer was interested in the evolution of the mental processes involved in magic, religion, and science. In his evolutionary scheme, magic came first and was based on the principles of contact and **sympathetic magic**. “Magicians” believed that they could control nature by bringing special elements together or, where direct contact was impossible, by substituting a concordant element. When magic failed, as Frazer knew it usually would, magicians turned to religion, distinguished by a sense of humility and acceptance that people cannot control nature but can only *ask* for divine intervention through prayer and other acts of supplication. Finally, as “correct” knowledge of the world increased, religion was supplanted by science, which, like magic, exerted control over nature, but control that worked. Like monotheism for Tylor, science for Frazer represented the mature stage of a cultural evolutionary sequence that retained features of ancestral stages. The present was a product of the past; thus, seemingly trivial, exotic, and irrelevant aspects of culture made sense.

Cultural evolutionism was the pre-eminent theory of nineteenth-century anthropology, and, because anthropology as a profession emerged in the nineteenth century, it is the earliest theory for which anthropology is widely known. Not all nineteenth-century anthropologists embraced the theory, however, notably many of the fledgling ethnographers working on the American frontier and in European colonies overseas. For these fieldworkers, experiencing rather than theorizing about Native cultures was more important. As fieldwork intensified, the penchant for grand synthesizing subsided, and anthropologists adopted new, non-evolutionary, and even anti-evolutionary perspectives. Cultural evolutionism fell out of favour, re-emerging only temporarily in the United States after World War II.

Evolutionism versus Diffusionism

Key Words: anthropo-geography, criterion of form, culture areas, culture circle, diffusionism, heliocentrism, hereditarianism, independent invention, Kulturkreis, psychic unity, racism

Classical cultural evolutionists embraced the nineteenth-century doctrine of **psychic unity**, formulated by German geographer and ethnographer Adolf Bastian (1826–1905). According to this doctrine, all peoples, primitive and civilized alike, had the same basic capacity for cultural change. Primitive peoples were less advanced than civilized peoples not because their primitiveness was innate but because they had been stunted in evolutionary growth through contact with other peoples or simply because they had started evolving later. The doctrine of psychic unity represented a continuation of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment belief that all peoples could progress.



FIGURE 1.8 Culture Areas of North America: Each culture area is an implied centre of cultural diffusion.

From DRIVER, Harold E. *Indians of North America*. Copyright © 1961 by the University of Chicago Press. Reprinted by permission of the University of Chicago Press.

Related to psychic unity was the doctrine of **independent invention**, an expression of faith that all peoples could be culturally creative. According to this doctrine, different peoples, given the same opportunity, could devise the same idea or artifact independently, without external stimulus or contact. Independent invention was one explanation of cultural change. The contrasting explanation was **diffusionism**, the doctrine that inventions arise only once and can be acquired by other groups only through borrowing or immigration. Diffusionism can be construed as non-egalitarian because it presupposes that some peoples are culturally creative while others can only copy. When cultural evolutionism fell out of favour in the early twentieth century, diffusionism was there to take its place.

A simple diffusionist concept was that of **culture areas**, introduced in 1917 by American anthropologist Clark Wissler (1870–1947). Motivated by New World pride, Wissler wanted to show European anthropologists that American Native groups were not all the same. Therefore, he divided them into distinct culture areas, each with a centre where the most important traits of the group originated and from which they had outwardly diffused. Following Wissler's lead, other students of American Native peoples used the culture area concept to organize data, catalogue artifacts, and arrange museum displays.

European versions of diffusionism were much more theoretically extreme. One notorious version was **heliocentrism**, promulgated by British and British Commonwealth anthropologists Grafton Elliot Smith (1871–1937), William Perry (1887–1949), and, for some of his career, William H.R. Rivers (1864–1922). Smith and his fellow theoreticians were fascinated by stone megaliths such as Egyptian pyramids, which they linked to a cult of sun worship. Citing similarities between pyramids and stone megaliths in Europe and Central and South America, Smith pronounced that world civilization had originated around 4000 BCE in Egypt, and then spread out, becoming more “dilute” and in some places never taking hold because local Native peoples were incapable of assimilating it. Smith converted Rivers and Perry, whose book *The Children of the Sun* (1923) became a staple of this theoretical trade.

Another extreme version of diffusionism was the **Kulturkreis**, or **culture circle**, school, derived in part from the **anthropo-geography** of German ethnologist Friedrich Ratzel (1844–1904). Interested in the relationship of

people to their geographical neighbours, anthropo-geographers expressed strong opposition to Adolf Bastian's doctrine of psychic unity. Ratzel believed that, after diffusion, culture traits could undergo adaptations to local conditions, masking their sources. To overcome this obstacle, he invoked the **criterion of form**, which implied that similar and functionally useless traits were the ones that had probably diffused. Ratzel's follower Leo Frobenius (1873–1938) used geographical statistics to explore patterns of diffusion further. The criterion of form and geographical statistics both figured in the *Kulturkreis* approaches of Fritz Graebner (1877–1934) and Wilhelm Schmidt (1868–1954). In *The Method of Ethnology* (1911), Graebner argued that primitive bands with seminal ideas had spread around the world in a complex pattern of overlapping and interacting concentric circles. In his 12-volume work *Origin of the Idea of God* (1912–54), Schmidt described how, through diffusion, the seminal idea of monotheism had “degenerated.”

The appeal of heliocentrism and the *Kulturkreis* approach in anthropology turned out to be relatively limited. An undercurrent of both approaches was the hereditarian belief that some human races were more capable of cultural innovation than others. **Hereditarianism**, or “**racism**,” was an attitude that early-twentieth-century anthropologists strongly opposed. For this reason, doctrinaire diffusionism never achieved a wide following. In the wake of the racial policies of National Socialism (i.e., Nazism), it became disreputable and faded from mainstream theoretical view. Accordingly, in recent decades, anthropologists, including archaeologists, who propose early human contact over long distances have been held accountable with the burden of proof. This is especially true in New World archaeology, where efforts to prove transatlantic and transpacific—and even extraterrestrial—contact have been greeted with varying degrees of skepticism. A sensational example is the effort to prove that certain Native American earthen works, glyphs, and “astronomical” structures are the legacy of contact with alien beings from outer space. Less sensational are claims that Viking explorers once penetrated deep into North America, leaving behind mysterious “rune stones.” A more respected example is the 1947 voyage of Thor Heyerdahl (1914–2002) between South America and Polynesia on his wooden raft *Kon-Tiki*. In the 1990s, the discovery in the state of Washington of the 9,000-year-old skeleton of “Kennewick Man,” with alleged Caucasian features, and the recognition of surprisingly old archaeological sites in South America softened the hard opposition of some New World archaeologists to the idea

of early transoceanic voyages. The result is that archaeological investigation of the peopling of the Americas is more open-minded on this issue than it was a generation ago. Much of this investigation is scholarly, but some of it is what scholars call fantastic, fringe, cult, or pseudo-archaeology. Three scholarly critiques of these latter genres are *Fantastic Archaeology: The Wild Side of North American Prehistory* (1991) by Stephen Williams; *Archaeological Fantasies: How Pseudoarchaeology Misrepresents the Past and Misleads the Public* (2006), edited by Garrett G. Fagan; and *Faking History: Essays on Aliens, Atlantis, Monsters, and More* (2013) by Jason Colavito. These critiques shed important light on the public image of archaeology and, more broadly, of anthropology.



FIGURE 1.9 *Kon-Tiki* (1947): Norwegian adventurer Thor Heyerdahl sailed across the Pacific Ocean from South America to Polynesia on this raft in order to demonstrate the feasibility of pre-Columbian contact between the two regions.

Reproduced by permission of the Kon-Tiki Museum, Oslo.

Archaeology Comes of Age

Key Words: the Imperial Synthesis, material culture, Moundbuilder Myth, Neolithic/New Stone Age, Paleolithic/Old Stone Age, seriationally, Stone Age, stratigraphy, Three Age System

Archaeology, the study of past **material culture**, arose during the Renaissance when scholars began to study classical artifacts to supplement what they could learn from classical texts. During the Enlightenment, archaeology continued to be the handmaiden of history, even though in northern Europe written records of the past were much more scant. An autonomous archaeology required that artifacts be the *only* kind of evidence of the past. This requirement could be met only after acceptance of the existence of “pre” history.

The scientific community began to accept the existence of prehistory toward the middle of the nineteenth century. This acceptance was built on decades of preceding archaeological work. The first significant archaeological chronology independent of written records was the **Three Age System** of Christian Thomsen (1788–1865). Thomsen was a Danish museum curator who organized artifacts into the sequence of Stone, Bronze, and Iron ages and then subdivided these ages **seriationally**, that is, according to the evolution of artifact style. He implemented his chronology in the Museum of Northern Antiquities in Copenhagen and incorporated it into his influential *Guidebook to Scandinavian Antiquity* (1836). Fellow countryman Jens J.A. Worsaae (1821–85) continued Thomsen’s work by investigating the **stratigraphy**, or systematic layering, of artifacts in Danish shell middens. In *The Primeval Antiquities of Denmark* (1843), Worsaae generalized the Three Age System to most of Europe. Daniel Wilson (1816–92), a British archaeologist who later emigrated to Canada, employed the Three Age System in *The Archaeology and Prehistoric Annals of Scotland* (1851); it was Wilson who actually coined the term “prehistory.” In the 1850s, archaeological examination of ancient dwellings on lakeshores in Switzerland showed that the late **Stone Age** of Europe had seen plant and animal domestication. To designate this new phase of agriculture and animal husbandry, archaeologists added the **Neolithic** period, or **New Stone Age**, to their chronologies.

These early archaeological chronologies had to fit within the relatively brief time span of approximately 6,000 years, which is how long most Christian scientists believed that human beings had been living on the Earth. In order to make prehistory longer, new archaeological evidence was required. This evidence came from Stone Age caves and glacial deposits on river terraces in Britain and France. The key finds here were human skeletal remains and stone tools in geological association with skeletal remains of extinct prehistoric animals, mainly mammoth and woolly rhinoceros. These finds conflicted with fundamentalist Christianity because the fundamentalist, or literal, interpretation of the Bible was that God had created human beings *after* other forms of life. Non-fundamentalist Christians were more inclined to accept this new archaeological evidence and the longer period of prehistory it implied. In 1859, British geologist Charles Lyell (1797–1875) led a contingent of distinguished scientists to the Somme River Valley in northern France, where amateur archaeologist Jacques Boucher de Crèvecœur de Perthes (1788–1868) had discovered a series of old Stone Age tools. The contingent pronounced the tools authentic. Their action marked the first scientific consensus about the great time depth of prehistory and is the symbolic birth of the science of prehistoric archaeology.

This action spurred more prehistoric archaeological research that was incorporated into major syntheses such as Lyell's *The Geological Evidence of the Antiquity of Man* (1863) and *Pre-Historic Times* (1865) by John Lubbock, who coined the term **Paleolithic**, or **Old Stone Age**. Well before the end of the century, archaeologists had established a detailed chronology of the Paleolithic and all other major stages of European prehistory.

Like cultural evolutionists, archaeologists used the comparative method to reconstruct the prehistoric past. A prime example was Lubbock, whose 1865 book was fully titled *Pre-Historic Times, as Illustrated by Ancient Remains, and the Manner and Customs of Modern Savages*. But prehistoric archaeologists were less generous than cultural evolutionists in granting modern “savages” the ability to progress. Lubbock believed that white Europeans were the prime beneficiaries of a material progress that had been achieved through millennia of human struggle. In *A History of Archaeological Thought* (1989), Bruce Trigger represented Lubbock's attitude as **the Imperial Synthesis** and characterized it as racist rationalization for European colonial expansion. Racism was certainly widespread because, outside Europe where the prehistoric past was not

“white,” the accomplishments of prehistoric races were denigrated. In North America, archaeologists were loath to accept the idea that Native peoples could have built the complex earthen mounds found along the Mississippi river valley. Instead, they proposed the **Moundbuilder Myth**, according to which the mounds had been built by a pre-Native race that either had migrated to Central and South America to build the grand monuments of the Aztecs and Incas or had “degenerated” into “Indians.” A cornerstone publication on this controversy was *Ancient Monuments of the Mississippi Valley* (1848) by Ephraim G. Squier (1821–88) and Edwin H. Davis (1811–88). The same racist attitude prevailed in Africa, where archaeologists attributed mysterious stone ruins to King Solomon or other ancient Near Easterners. British colonial capitalist Cecil Rhodes (1853–1902) embraced this opinion and used it to argue that, in colonizing former Rhodesia, Europeans were really reclaiming lands that were formerly white. Colonialist archaeology came into play almost everywhere European archaeologists encountered non-white Native peoples.

In modern times, more and more archaeologists have come to recognize the political nature of their discipline and to acknowledge that racism was endemic in their nineteenth-century forerunners. A case in point is archaeologist David Hurst Thomas’s book *Skull Wars: Kennewick Man, Archaeology, and the Battle for Native American Identity* (2000). In his book, Thomas recounts the troubled history of grave robbing, the public display of Native peoples, and other dehumanizing practices that characterized American archaeology and physical anthropology well into the twentieth century. He concludes on an optimistic note that current generations of American archaeologists and Native Americans have begun to work together to explore the human past in mutually acceptable ways. Thomas and other influential archaeologists have helped make contemporary archaeology highly engaged politically, ethically, and theoretically. Archaeologists today embrace the full range of current anthropological theories and perspectives, including Marxism, feminism, anthropological political economy, postmodernity, globalization, and public anthropology. Public anthropologists and archaeologists are especially attuned to issues of accountability and inclusiveness in the conduct of research.

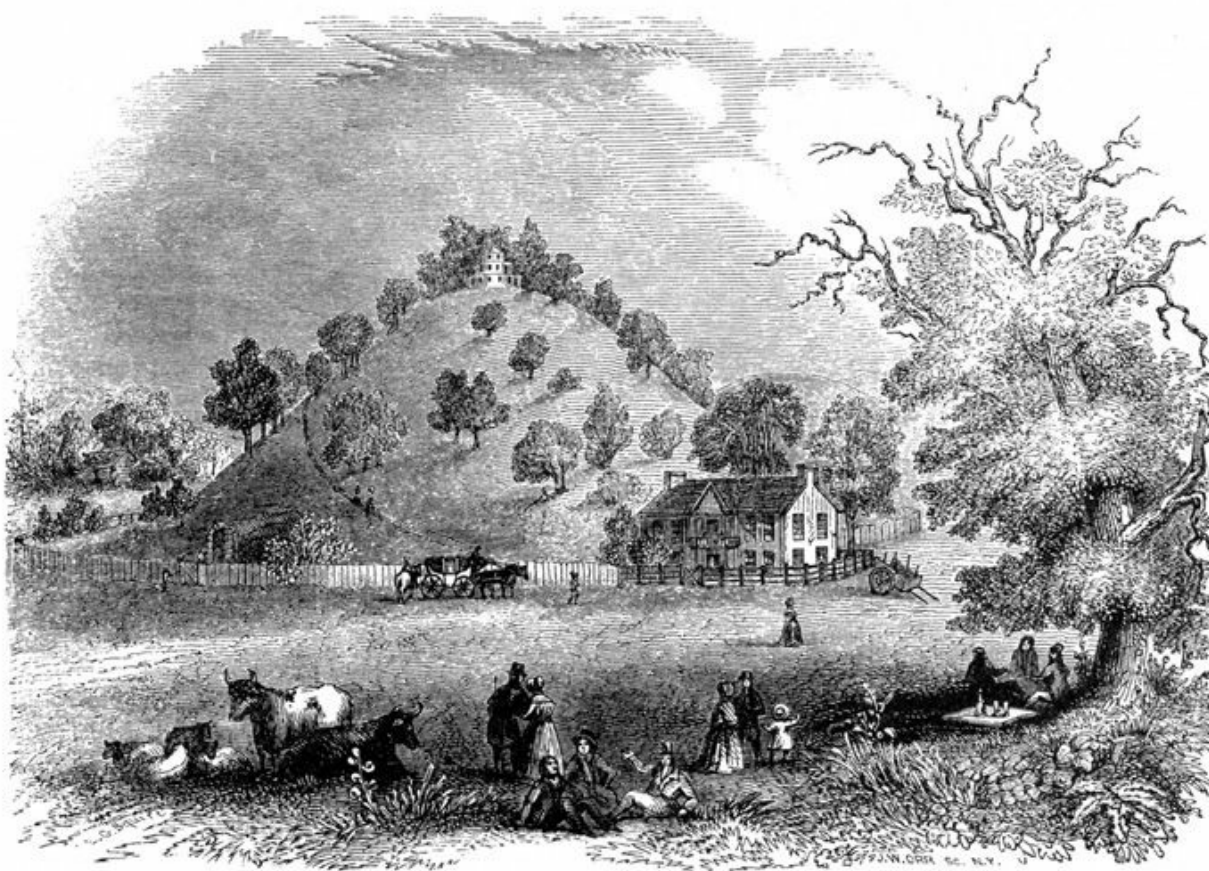


FIGURE 1.10 Grave Creek Burial Mound, West Virginia: Proponents of the nineteenth-century Moundbuilder Myth refused to believe that mounds such as this one, depicted here by an artist, could have been constructed by American Indians or their ancestors.

From SQUIER, Ephraim G. and E.H. Davis. *Ancient Monuments of the Mississippi Valley*. Volume 1. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Contributions to Knowledge, 1848.

Charles Darwin and Darwinism

Key Words: altruism, binomial nomenclature, biogenetic law, catastrophism, creationism, Darwinism, DNA, Great Chain of Being, group selection, inheritance of acquired characteristics, Lamarckism, missing links, natural selection, Neptunists, ontogeny, orthogenesis, phylogeny, sexual selection, Social Darwinism, species, struggle for existence, survival of the fittest, swamping effect, synthetic philosophy, Synthetic Theory of Evolution, teleology, uniformitarianism, vitalism, Vulcanists

The racism of nineteenth-century anthropology was linked to the smug optimism and sense of superiority of Victorian times. **Darwinism**, the name given to ideas associated with Charles Darwin's theory of biological evolution, was part cause and part effect of these Victorian attitudes. The long, complex story of Darwinism begins with the Scientific Revolution.



MAMMALIA.

ORDER I. PRIMATES.

Fore-teeth cutting; upper 4, parallel; teats 2, pectoral.

1. HOMO.

Sapiens. Diurnal; varying by education and situation.

2. Four-footed, mute, hairy. *Wild Man.*
3. Copper-coloured; choleric, erect. *American.*
Hair black, straight, thick; nostrils wide, face harsh; beard scanty; obstinate, content free. Paints himself with fine red lines. Regulated by customs.
4. Fair, sanguine, brawny. *European.*
Hair yellow, brown, flowing; eyes blue; gentle, acute, inventive. Covered with close vestments. Governed by laws.
5. Sooty, melancholy, rigid. *Asiatic.*
Hair black; eyes dark; severe, haughty, covetous. Covered with loose garments. Governed by opinions.
6. Black, phlegmatic, relaxed. *African.*
Hair black, frizzled; skin silky; nose flat; lips tumid; crafty, indolent, negligent. Anoints himself with grease. Governed by caprice.

Myiophis Varying by climate or art.

1. Small, active, timid. *Mountaineer.*
2. Large, indolent. *Patagonian.*
3. Less fertile. *Hottentot.*
4. Beardless. *American.*
5. Head conic. *Chinese.*
6. Head flattened. *Canadian.*

The anatomical, physiological, natural, moral, civil and social histories of man, are best described by their respective writers.

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FIGURE 1.11 Carolus Linnaeus's Biological Classification of Humanity: In *Systema Naturae* (1735), Linnaeus (1707–78) was one of the first naturalists to classify the genus *Homo* within the animal kingdom.

While dynamic, the universe envisioned by Isaac Newton was not evolving. Bodies moving according to the law of universal gravitation were not being transformed into *new* bodies or arranged in new ways. Evolution, however, was a logical next step. The first Newtonian-era scientists to explore evolution were geologists interested in the origin and development of

the Earth. In medieval cosmologies, the Earth was “special” because it was the centre of the universe and the habitat of people, the noblest creation of God. In the seventeenth century, such views persisted, so geology had to be carefully reconciled with scripture. One reconciliation was attempted by Thomas Burnet (1635–1715) in *The Sacred Theory of the Earth* (1691). After Creation, the Earth had cooled, and layers of land formed above seas. The shape of the Earth was a perfect circle, created for people who then sinned and had to be punished. Punishment took the form of a deluge, or global flood, that caused almost all land to collapse under water, leaving “ugly,” imperfectly shaped mountains as a reminder of this sin. Another reconciliation was attempted by William Whiston (1667–1752) in *A New Theory of the Earth* (1696). After Creation, a comet had passed Earth and distributed dust that solidified into land by the force of gravity. Later, another comet distributed drops of water that precipitated the biblical Flood. Both Whiston’s and Burnet’s reconciliations were theologically ominous because they implied that the Earth was very old and rendered constant divine intervention redundant.

Meanwhile, as faith in science began to supplant faith in Christianity, a pressing problem arose. Geologists discovered fossils of marine forms of life embedded in sedimentary rocks formed underwater but currently far above water on land. How did these fossils get there? Answering this question was a preoccupation of eighteenth-century geology. An initial explanation was that the rocks were products of the geological destruction, dislocation, and receding waters of the biblical Flood. It soon became apparent, however, that marine fossil-bearing strata were far more geologically complex. There were two options: either water had receded or land had risen. Geologists who preferred the first option were called **Neptunists**, named after Neptune, the Roman god of the sea; those who preferred the second option were called **Vulcanists**, named after Vulcan, the Roman god of fire. Pursuing the initial explanation, Neptunists maintained that marine fossils were deposited in sedimentary rocks formed underwater and then exposed as water receded. Vulcanists also believed that sedimentary rocks were formed underwater, but they maintained that the rocks were then thrust above water by earthquakes and volcanoes caused by pressure from a hot, molten, subterranean earthly core. When Vulcanists asked Neptunists where all the water went, Neptunists had no answer. But until there was more geological evidence of the power of earthquakes and volcanoes, Vulcanists were vulnerable too.

A convincing, essentially Vulcanist geology was finally achieved by James Hutton (1726–97) in *Theory of the Earth* (1795), later popularized by John Playfair (1748–1819) in *Illustrations of the Huttonian Theory of the Earth* (1802). In the Hutton–Playfair model, not all sedimentary rocks were formed in universal water. Some debris washed into water from land, while molten masses penetrated the ocean floor and deposited additional strata, which were then thrust above water by volcanoes. These geological processes had been operating for so long that the age of the Earth was almost beyond scientific comprehension. Hutton summarized his view of relentless geological activity as “no vestige of a beginning, no prospect of an end.”



FIGURE 1.12 Comparison of Ape and Human Skeletons: By comparing the skeletons of apes and “man,” Thomas H. Huxley (1825–95) compiled circumstantial evidence for human evolution.

From *Man’s Place in Nature*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. Copyright © 1959 by The University of Michigan Press.

All these developments culminated in Charles Lyell’s landmark multivolume work *Principles of Geology* (1830–33), a foundation of modern geology. To account for geological change, Lyell invoked a combination of agents, some Neptunist and others Vulcanist, that worked slowly over long periods of time. Because present-day agents of change such as wind and

water erosion were slow, yet the changes they had produced were dramatic, Lyell was forced to conclude that the Earth was extremely old. His geology was a brand of **uniformitarianism**, the doctrine that the same nondramatic agents of geological change have been operating throughout history. Uniformitarianism contrasts with **catastrophism**, the doctrine that agents of geological change have been more dramatic in the past than in the present. Conservative scientists of Christian background who believed that the Earth was extremely young favoured catastrophism over uniformitarianism because dramatic geological agents such as global floods could produce major change quickly. A distinguished catastrophist and antagonist of Lyell was French paleontologist Georges Cuvier (1769–1832), who interpreted change in the fossil record as evidence of a series of mass near-extinctions interspersed with survivals of a few fortunate life forms. Cuvier's catastrophism was "progressive," because it involved positive directional change, but he was not an evolutionist because change for him was essentially discontinuous, without transformation. Lyell's uniformitarianism was less progressive because, like his predecessor Hutton, he regarded constructive and destructive agents as offsetting each other, in the long run achieving equilibrium. Lyell was a geological evolutionist, however, because his geological agents caused transformational change. And while Lyell opposed uniformitarianism in biology, the great achievement of his friend Charles Darwin was to combine the transformative nature of uniformitarianism with the progressive nature of catastrophism into a comprehensive theory of biological evolution.



FIGURE 1.13 Charles Darwin's Study at Down House, Kent, England: Darwin (1809–82) wrote *On the Origin of Species* and other books here.

Engraving, 1882. English School, 19th century. © Private Collection / Bridgeman Images.

In the history of the idea of biological evolution, the great debate was about the origin of **species**. A species is a group of plants or animals whose members can reproduce with one another but cannot reproduce with members of other species. Where do species come from? The traditional scientific answer, based on Judeo-Christianity, was that God created all species, which were immutable, or fixed. New species did not appear in Creation through evolution, and old species did not disappear through extinction. Moreover, species were arranged in a fixed linear hierarchy, construed by medieval philosophers as the **Great Chain of Being**. Traditionally, species were “real,” not merely names for groups of individuals. They were transcendental, Platonic essences attesting to the perfection of Creation. A prime example of

traditional **creationism** was developed by Carolus Linnaeus (1707–78), the Swedish biologist who classified living things into a hierarchy of taxonomic categories, using a system of **binomial nomenclature**, or two names, for the category of species. In his *System of Nature* (1735), Linnaeus introduced many of the taxonomic names (of kingdoms, phyla, genera, and so forth) that are used in evolutionary biology today. Until late in his life, however, Linnaeus denied evolution and adhered strongly to the creationist position.

More liberal, or radical, Enlightenment biologists broke rank with traditional creationists. Their answer to the question of the origin of species was that species were created by nature and were mutable, or susceptible to change. New species appeared and disappeared through natural causes. Species were not necessarily arranged in a fixed linear hierarchy, and they were not “real” in the Platonic sense of the term. Instead, they were transient categories that altered the face of Creation. Biologists who adhered to this set of ideas were called transformists, developmentalists, or, later, evolutionists.

Before Darwin, a number of scientists proposed theories of biological evolution, among them Georges-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon (1707–78), and Darwin’s own grandfather, Erasmus Darwin (1731–1802). The most influential pre-Darwinian evolutionist was Jean-Baptiste Pierre Antoine de Monet Lamarck (1744–1829), whose *Zoological Philosophy* (1809) appeared exactly 50 years before Darwin’s *On the Origin of Species* (1859). Lamarck’s approach to evolution differed from Darwin’s in ways that can be illustrated by the example of the evolution of the long-necked giraffe. According to Lamarck, the ancestor of the long-necked giraffe was a giraffe with a short neck. These short-necked giraffes lived on savannah-like grasslands where desirable edible vegetation was available on trees. To reach this vegetation, the giraffes stretched their necks. As a result, their offspring were born with longer necks, that is, necks longer than they would have been if their parents had not stretched. This new generation of giraffes stretched *their* necks for the same reason, so *their* offspring were born with still longer necks. Over time, as this process continued, neck length increased, until the present-day long-necked giraffe evolved. Lamarck was unable to *prove* that ancestral and descendant giraffes belonged to different species because, with ancestral giraffes extinct, he could not demonstrate that members of the two groups were unable to reproduce. Nonetheless, by comparing the magnitude of their difference to the magnitude of differences among known species, he was able to render this judgment.

The non-Darwinian feature of Lamarckian evolution illustrated in this example will be obvious to any student of modern biology. It is the feature known as **inheritance of acquired characteristics**. In the example, the characteristic of longer necks was inherited by offspring because it was acquired by parents. Modern biologists have shown that acquired characteristics are not inherited unless their acquisition itself is hereditary, or preprogrammed in deoxyribonucleic acid (**DNA**). Except for recombination, DNA is inherited from generation to generation intact. Other non-Darwinian features of Lamarckian evolution, not illustrated in this example, are **vitalism**, the doctrine that evolution is self-motivated, or willed; **teleology**, the doctrine that evolution adheres to a long-range purpose or goal; and **orthogenesis**, the doctrine that evolution has worked in a straight line to produce *Homo sapiens*. From many moral points of view, these features make Lamarckian evolution more palatable than Darwinian evolution. In the early nineteenth century, when Darwin was growing up, the Lamarckian version of evolution was the one most commonly discussed.

Charles Darwin (1809–82) grew up in England at the dawn of the Victorian era. As a young man, he wanted to study medicine, but he soon learned that he could not stand the sight of blood, so he dropped out of medical school in Edinburgh and enrolled in Christ's College, Cambridge. At Cambridge, he became a budding naturalist and was encouraged by a number of faculty "mentors." One helped arrange his appointment as naturalist on the ship *H.M.S. Beagle*, which in 1831 set out on a five-year voyage around the world. The voyage of the *Beagle* was a crucible for Darwin's ideas.

Before the *Beagle* left England, Darwin had begun reading Lyell's *Principles of Geology*. During the voyage, he completed reading this work and became inspired to search for a biological process equivalent to uniformitarian processes in geology. As the *Beagle* sailed around the Atlantic and Pacific coasts of South America, Darwin observed that the geographical distribution of varieties of plants and animals correlated with the distribution of variation in useful environmental resources. When he visited the Galapagos Islands off the coast of Ecuador, he observed that varieties of finches and tortoises differed slightly from one island to another and also differed from varieties on the South American mainland. How and why did these differences develop?

When the *Beagle* arrived back in England, Darwin was already converted to the idea of evolution. He undertook years of scientific research to

strengthen his reputation as a naturalist while he pondered new non-Lamarckian mechanisms that might make evolution work. Then he read *An Essay on the Principle of Population* (1798) by Thomas Robert Malthus (1766–1834). Malthus was the pessimistic political theorist who explained how the human population of the world was increasing geometrically (2, 4, 8, 16, 32, etc.) while global resources needed for human survival were increasing only arithmetically (2, 4, 6, 8, 10, etc.). The inevitable consequence of these trends was that not everyone born could possibly survive. Darwin embraced this Malthusian vision and broadened it to include all of biological nature, where organisms engage in a **struggle for existence** producing **survival of the fittest**.

Knowing now how evolution worked, Darwin began to draft his book on evolution. He worked on it sporadically for many years until in 1858 he received a letter from fellow naturalist Alfred Russel Wallace (1823–1913). Wallace, writing from the Pacific South Seas, described a theory of evolution by natural selection that Darwin recognized immediately as almost exactly like his own. After consulting with friends, he decided to finish his book quickly. First, however, Darwin and Wallace presented a joint paper on evolution to a meeting of the Linnaean Society in London (neither man was actually there). The following year, in 1859, Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* appeared. Ever since, the theory of evolution by natural selection, independently formulated by both Darwin and Wallace, has been known as "Darwinism."

A good way to understand Darwin's theory of evolution is to contrast it with Lamarck's theory using the example of the long-necked giraffe. Darwin would have approached this example with a different premise. A group, or population, of ancestral short-necked giraffes was living on savannah-like grasslands. They needed to eat vegetation from trees to survive. Some giraffes had slightly longer necks than others. These giraffes had a slight advantage over the other giraffes in the competitive struggle for vegetation needed to survive. Beating out the competition because of this natural advantage, they ate more, became healthier, or in some other way had more offspring. Gradually, over time, as the long-necked giraffes had more offspring than the short-necked giraffes, average neck length in the population increased, until the present long-necked giraffe species evolved.

Darwin represented this sequence of events as **natural selection**, meaning, metaphorically, that "nature" selects advantageous traits just like

human breeders “artificially” select advantageous traits when they domesticate plants and animals. The result in both cases is that organisms become adapted to their environments. To argue his case in *On the Origin of Species*, Darwin adduced several kinds of evidence. Except for the results of plant and animal breeding, almost all of this evidence was circumstantial. He argued that anatomical and embryological similarities among organisms, the presence of vestigial organs, and, although incomplete, the record of fossils were all consistent with his theory. A problem for Darwinism—then and now—is that this same evidence is consistent with many versions of creationism. Suffice it to say that eventually the scientific community came to accept Darwin’s theory. His theory represents an extension of the Scientific Revolution from astronomy and physics into biology. Darwin really went *beyond* Newton, because he showed that basic structures of the universe evolve.

On the Origin of Species provoked a barrage of moral, religious, and social criticism. Many critics failed to realize, or admit, that the book made hardly any reference to the evolution of *Homo sapiens*. Darwin ducked this controversial topic for several years. Some of his friends, however, confronted the controversy head-on. The main implication for *Homo sapiens* was the evolution of human mental and moral qualities. Most Christians believed that animals lacked spirituality and were, mentally and morally, a world apart from human beings. Could evolution bridge this gap? In *The Geological Evidence of the Antiquity of Man* (1863), Charles Lyell described human evolution as a natural leap onto a new plane of life. Alfred Russel Wallace disagreed, arguing that mental and moral superiority would have conferred no real selective advantage on animals and, therefore, could not have evolved in the first place. Why, for example, would an animal *need* to be artistic, mathematical, or philosophical? According to Wallace, divine intervention must have been responsible. Other scientists were more open to the idea of Darwinian human evolution. At the time, only a few human fossils were known, and, unfortunately for human evolutionists, these fossils appeared neither particularly old nor particularly primitive. Still, in *Evidence as to Man’s Place in Nature* (1863), Thomas Henry Huxley (1825–95)—nicknamed “Darwin’s Bulldog” because he defended Darwin so staunchly in public debates—classified people and apes in the same taxonomic order. Without fossils, the artifact record of prehistory became more important, so human evolutionists also cited the work of archaeologists such as John

Lubbock and cultural evolutionists such as Lewis Henry Morgan and Edward Burnett Tylor.

Darwin eventually published his views on human evolution in *The Descent of Man* (1871). Much of this book, and also much of Darwin's *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and the Animals* (1872), was devoted to the argument that differences between animals and people are differences in degree rather than in kind. To explain the evolution of human physical traits, Darwin used the mechanism of **sexual selection**. With sexual selection, traits evolve not because they confer an adaptive advantage in the struggle for existence but because they make members of one sex more attractive to the other and in this way increase reproductive success. Human intelligence, Darwin said, was evolved by natural selection as a by-product of upright stature, which freed human hands for the use of tools. To explain the evolution of human morality, Darwin relied on the mechanism of **group selection**. The core of morality was **altruism**, the willingness to sacrifice oneself for the good of others. Altruism was initially selected in groups, when one member behaved altruistically and, as a result, other group members benefited. Later, after human beings became intelligent, they extended altruism beyond the local group to all humanity in the form of abstract moral codes.

Viewed from the perspective of modern science, Darwin's explanations appear to conflate, or confuse, biological and cultural evolution. In this regard, he was not much different from his Victorian scientist contemporaries. Almost all nineteenth-century human evolutionists were extremely hereditarian. Like "racism" in archaeology, racism in biological anthropology was a legacy from the nineteenth century.

Darwin and his friends did not espouse many of the religious, moral, and social attitudes now labelled "Darwinian." The main religious challenge to his theories was not based on biblical fundamentalism, because by the 1860s the Bible was no longer widely accepted as necessarily historically accurate. Instead, it was based on morality. If human beings were the product of evolution, not divine creation, would not a system of morality have to be based on the process of evolution itself? And if so, would not the easiest way to construct such a system be to treat evolution as intrinsically and ultimately purposeful? The problem was that, contrasted with Lamarckian evolution, Darwinian evolution appeared to lack ultimate purpose; instead it operated opportunistically, selecting characteristics adapted to only a circumscribed

time and place. Alternatively, if Darwinian evolution were a divine instrument—God’s way of creating—the mechanism of natural selection appeared excessively brutal. It involved relentlessly harsh struggle, competition, and death for individuals unable to adapt. It was always possible, of course, to argue, as many Darwinians did, that these unfortunate losses were compensated for by evolutionary “winners,” who helped humanity “improve.” But this position was morally precarious, and in most cases it was easier to abandon Darwinian evolution in favour of the Lamarckian mechanism of inheritance of acquired characteristics, which seemed more humane and offered hope that people might take charge of their evolutionary fate. In the late nineteenth century, **Lamarckism** became the doctrine of choice for the majority of scientists seeking to reconcile evolution with religious morality.

In discussions of social morality, the term **Social Darwinism** is historically misleading. Most of the social attitudes denoted by this term derive not from Darwin but from Herbert Spencer, the most philosophical and sociological of the classical cultural evolutionists. Spencer promoted a grandiose **synthetic philosophy** based on the premise that homogeneity was evolving into heterogeneity in several universal domains. Referring to the domain of evolutionary biology, Spencer was Lamarckian rather than Darwinian, but referring to the domain of *social* evolution, he believed that vigorous individual enterprise had risen to the fore. According to Spencer, a system of individuals acting in their own self-interest produced the maximum social good. There were no moral absolutes. Instead, “might” made “right.” Spencer believed that human evolution should be allowed to take its “natural” course, unfettered by interventions that would “artificially” bolster human weaknesses otherwise slated for defeat.

Spencer’s was the most popular version of Social Darwinism and the one used most often to rationalize social inequities among races, classes, and genders. Meanwhile, Huxley, Darwin’s “bulldog,” advocated an opposing version. Huxley was an agnostic who actively doubted religion and believed that science should maintain moral neutrality. He opposed Spencer and anyone else who based social morality on biological evolution. To the contrary, argued Huxley, through cosmic accident *Homo sapiens* had evolved to the point where people were able to understand that evolution has *no* purpose. Why not take advantage of this opportunity and create a morality that is independent of evolution and even goes *against* the harshness of

nature? In the nineteenth century, between the extremes of Huxley and Spencer, there were so many different versions of Social Darwinism that the term really needs to be redefined almost every time it is used.

Amidst all the wrangling over religious and social morality, Darwin's theory of evolution by natural selection suffered major scientific setbacks. From the beginning, there had not been much experimental proof that natural selection could produce new species, even with artificial breeding, which produced mainly subspecies, or varieties. Another problem was the fossil record. Darwin admitted that the record was imperfect and contained gaps, or **missing links**. Some scientists filled these gaps with speculative evolutionary sequences, such as those based on the **biogenetic law**. This law stated that **ontogeny**, the growth of an individual, recapitulated **phylogeny**, the evolutionary growth of a species. Proponents of the law made extreme statements about embryological and paleontological similarities and detracted from the credibility of evolution as empirical science. Yet another problem was the age of the Earth. Evolution by natural selection was a slow process that required a great deal of time to account for changes observable in the fossil record. Contemporary physicists, thinking about volcanic activity as an agent of geological change, decided that the Earth had been much hotter in the past than in the present and that volcanic activity had been much more forceful. A troubling implication was that this volcanic activity had wrought geological changes too quickly for Darwinian evolution to have worked. A final problem for Darwin was the **swamping effect**, the name given to the observation that small variations serving as raw material for natural selection would always be "swamped out" through heredity, preventing natural selection from ever getting started. Darwin was aware of all these scientific problems and as a result grew discouraged. He lost confidence in the complete efficacy of natural selection and, in later editions of *On the Origin of Species*, turned to other evolutionary mechanisms, including the Lamarckian mechanism of inheritance of acquired characteristics.

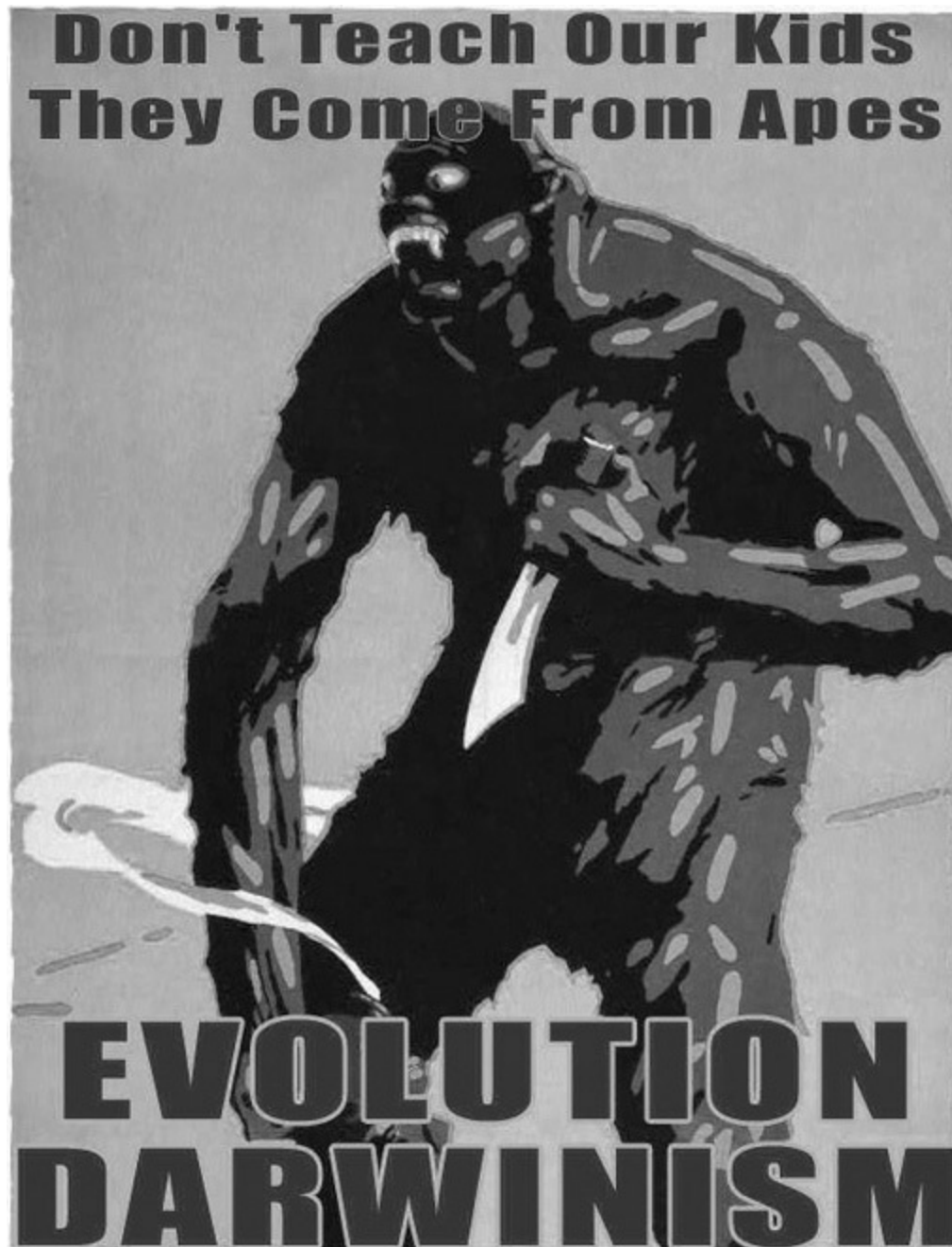


FIGURE 1.14 Feelings about Darwinism Run High: This contemporary poster satirizes opposition to the teaching of evolution.

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The solutions to Darwin's scientific problems were beyond his nineteenth-century grasp. What Darwin needed was the theory of biological

heredity pioneered, unknown to him, by Austrian monk Gregor Mendel (1822–84). By experimenting with pea plants, Mendel observed patterns of inheritance that showed heritable traits to be discrete rather than blended. Some traits, called recessive, disappeared temporarily in the presence of other traits, called dominant, but reappeared later when they were by themselves. Mendel knew little about the physical substance of heredity, now known to be **DNA**, located on genes on chromosomes in the nuclei of cells. His observations went largely unnoticed until 1900, when they were rediscovered by biologists investigating inheritance in plants. These biologists stressed heritable change by mutation, or large changes that occur within a single generation. In contrast, Darwinian natural selection involves small changes that occur over many generations. Biologists thereby separated into two camps: one, the Mendelians, promoting mutation, and the other, the Darwinians, promoting natural selection as the mechanism of evolution. In the 1930s, a group of mathematically inclined biologists showed that Mendelism and Darwinism are complementary, not antagonistic, because genes are subject to both mutation and natural selection. These biologists devised the **Synthetic Theory of Evolution**, whereby an evolving population is conceived as a “gene pool” and evolution is defined as a change in the relative frequency of genes in that gene pool. The Synthetic Theory of Evolution forms the basis of population genetics, the branch of biology with the scientific vocabulary used to study evolution today.

Sigmund Freud

Key Words: ego, Electra complex, father figures, hysteria, id, incest, Oedipus complex, pleasure principle, primal patricide, primeval family, psyche, racial memory, reality principle, subconscious, sublimate, superego, taboos, totems

Besides Charles Darwin and Karl Marx, the nineteenth century produced four other intellectual giants whose influence on anthropology has been profound: Sigmund Freud, Émile Durkheim, Max Weber, and Ferdinand de Saussure. Each of these theorists warrants special attention, beginning with Freud.

Sigmund Freud (1858–1939) was a clinical psychologist who tried to help his patients overcome psychological disorders. He became an anthropologist of sorts when he speculated on the origin of these disorders. Ironically, anthropologists ended up rejecting most of Freud's anthropological speculations, while accepting many of his clinical insights.

Freud was born in Vienna into a middle-class family headed by a strict father. In the 1880s, while he was a medical student, he became interested in radical medical experiments in which **hysteria**, a psychological state characterized by morbid or senseless emotionalism, appeared to be cured by hypnosis. Under hypnosis, hysterical patients recalled some experience, usually from childhood, that had been traumatic, and then woke up and were no longer hysterical. For Freud, these experiments pointed to the existence of a mental **subconscious**. Patients with psychological disorders had concealed from themselves some action or thought that conflicted with the moral codes of society, Freud thought, and had then repressed the conflict in their subconscious mind, where it festered. Freud set out to determine how such patients might resolve their conflicts therapeutically. He began by studying dreams. In classical Freudian psychology, dreams are expressions of the subconscious mind. They express, in symbolic form, wishes or desires of which society disapproves. Freud probed the subconscious by deciphering dream symbols, most of which he interpreted as sexual because he believed that sex was the desire that society disapproved of most strongly and, therefore, was the desire most likely to lead to conflict and repression. In 1900, he published these views in his first major book, *The Interpretation of Dreams*.

FIGURE 1.15 Freudian Humour: It seems ironic that so much light-hearted humour derives from a man whose vision of human nature was so dark.



**"Offhand, I'd say your problem stems
from a deep-seated edifice complex."**

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Freud proceeded to analyze art, literature, religion, and even politics in the same manner he analyzed dreams. These were ideologies and institutions that expressed, in symbolic form, feelings that could not be expressed in reality. They, too, held clues to repressed desires. Eventually, Freud's

distinction between psychologically “sick” and healthy people blurred, and he decided that the subconscious mind was universal. He divided the subconscious, sometimes called the **psyche**, into three levels: the **id**, or libido, the source of desire; the **ego**, or “I,” which experienced the outside world; and the **superego**, or conscience, which monitored the id and mediated between the ego and social norms. According to Freud, the ego and superego could be moulded by culture, which restrained the id, the animalistic part of human nature with instinctive appetites and drives. The thrust of Freudian psychotherapy was to probe the subconscious to find the source of repressed conflict, make the patient consciously aware of the conflict, and thereby open the door to curing the patient with therapeutic devices.

The Freudian depiction of human nature was pessimistic: everyone was born into a psychological minefield of potential conflict. Some people negotiated this minefield better than others, avoided conflict, and grew up psychologically healthy. Others, less fortunate, succumbed to conflict, developed psychological disorders, and ended up in therapy.

After Freud had finished creating his clinical framework, he wondered why this troubled state of human affairs had come into existence. His answer to this question was anthropological, with a twist. He presented his version of anthropology in a trilogy of books: *Totem and Taboo* (1918), *The Future of an Illusion* (1928), and *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1930). His central insight was that people in the present experience conflict because humanity in the past experienced conflict. Each person relives, or recapitulates, this past as **racial memory**. Freud’s account begins with the **pleasure principle**, his name for the natural libidinous tendency of people to seek psychosexual pleasure and avoid psychosexual pain. Culture opposes the pleasure principle because the consequence of everybody seeking pleasure would be chaos. Most people come to accept that they cannot seek pleasure directly, even though their desire to do so remains a source of tension. Instead, they rechannel, or **sublimate**, their desires into fantasies and institutions, which, according to Freud, represent an escape from libidinous reality. These people are acting on the **reality principle** because they are psychologically mature and realize that acting on the pleasure principle will get them into trouble. Psychologically immature people are inclined to act on libidinous impulse, experience conflict, undergo repression, and become neurotic or psychotic. For Freud, the least “civilized” cultures were the least repressive, so

“primitive” adults were like civilized children.

For Freud, civilization was opposed to human biological nature because it tried to tame the animal instincts of people. In fact, civilization was built on sublimated desire. How did this happen? He answered this question with a story about human evolution. The story began with the **primeval family**, which, for Freud, was monogamous, nuclear, patriarchal, and characterized by unrestricted sex. This family was fraught with problems and could not continue in its original form for very long. In the primeval family, sons desired their mother sexually, but their authoritarian father had priority of sexual access. Therefore, the sons resented their father, even though they respected and loved him at the same time. These ambivalent feelings were a source of major conflict. Eventually, resentment built up to the point where the sons got together and killed their father in the **primal patricide**, an act of profound consequence.

Patricide was a libidinous act that the larger social group recognized as too disruptive to be allowed to recur. Moreover, the sons felt crippling remorse and guilt as a result of what they had done. To prevent a repeat performance, the group created cultural prohibitions— **taboos**—against unsanctioned killing and, equally important, against **incest** that might allow disruptive sexual feelings to come to the fore. The group also invented **totems**, objects of collective veneration, in the form of **father figures**, toward which sons could sublimate their ambivalent feelings. For Freud, these actions ushered in the totemic phase of human history. This phase, characterized by the superego, ensured that the expression of libidinous drives was repressed by guilt.

For men, the psychological legacy of all this was the **O edipus complex**, named after the legendary Greek son of Laius who unwittingly slew his father and went on to marry his mother. This complex was characterized by unresolved guilt-inducing desire of men for sexual gratification through their mothers. The corresponding legacy for women was the **Electra complex**, named after the legendary Greek daughter of Agamemnon who sought to kill her mother to avenge her father’s murder. The Oedipus and Electra complexes were not equivalent, because Freud believed that male and female sexuality fundamentally differed.

From the perspective of twenty-first-century anthropology, Freudian theory certainly appears “sexist.” From the perspective of early-twentieth-

century anthropology, his account of how each person relives the psychic development of humanity appeared to be a caricature of classical cultural evolutionism. If they were to incorporate some of Freud's themes, early-twentieth-century anthropologists had to jettison a hefty amount of his theoretical apparatus. This was accomplished by the school known as American psychological anthropology.

Émile Durkheim

Key Words: *anomie*, British social anthropology, collective consciousness, collective representations, elementary forms, elementary structures, French structural anthropology, group mind, mechanical solidarity, organic solidarity, profane, sacred, social facts

Émile Durkheim (1858–1917) was a distinguished nineteenth-century French sociologist. The theoretical foundation of twentieth-century French anthropology can be found in his work on social structure. Durkheim was also a major influence on key twentieth-century British anthropologists, in particular Alfred Reginald Radcliffe-Brown and his theory of structuralism and functionalism. For these reasons, he can be considered a forerunner of the two European schools known as **French structural anthropology** and **British social anthropology**.

Durkheim's familial legacy was Jewish. While young, he had a mystical experience that led him temporarily to Catholicism, but he ended up agnostic, albeit with a passionate interest in the cultural dimensions of religion. In 1879, he entered the elite École Normale Supérieure, where his philosophical bent set him apart from other students. At the time, following the Franco-Prussian War, France was experiencing a resurgence of nationalism and Catholicism, and Durkheim, a socialist as well as a Jew, found himself in the minority. In 1887, he moved to Bordeaux, site of the first teacher-training centre in France, where he worked to reform the French school system, introducing social science into the curriculum. His theories then developed in progression with the publication of four books: *Division of Labour in Society* (1893), *The Rules of Sociological Method* (1895), *Suicide* (1897), and *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (1912).

In *Division of Labour in Society*, Durkheim explored the diversification and integration of culture, identifying two integrative patterns. Older, more “primitive” cultures were less diversified and had little division of labour. More homogeneous, they cohered because individuals were *similar*. Durkheim called this pattern of integration **mechanical solidarity**. Recent, more “civilized” cultures were more diversified and had considerable division of labour. More heterogeneous, they cohered because individuals were *different*. His vision was of individuals functioning independently but in

harmony—much as the various organs of the body do to maintain an organism's life. Because this metaphor seemed so apt, he called this second pattern of integration **organic solidarity**. Durkheim's central insight was that social solidarity could be achieved in two different, organizationally opposite ways. His focus on social coherence, rather than change, represented a preference for what Auguste Comte called social statics rather than social dynamics. The Durkheimian vision of society was very different from that of Karl Marx, who saw solidarity as ephemeral and society riven with class conflict. For Marx, the state would eventually “wither away” and give rise to communism. For Durkheim, the more organic solidarity increased, the more government was necessary to regulate socially interdependent parts. Increased organic solidarity submerged the individual in an expanded social reality, where social interactions superseded individual interactions as determinants of social life. The academic discipline that would study social interactions was sociology.

Durkheim established the theoretical framework for sociology in *The Rules of Sociological Method*. Social interactions were to be considered **social facts** and explained in terms of other social facts, not in terms of biology or psychology. Behind this pronouncement was Durkheim's understanding that society was a realm unto itself, *sui generis*. He gave his conception of the social realm a special French twist. For Durkheim, social facts were **collective representations** of the **collective consciousness**, or **group mind**. This conception was Cartesian, following the rationalist French philosopher René Descartes, rather than Lockean, following the empiricist British philosopher John Locke. Rationalism was a fundamental part of the Durkheimian legacy to French structural anthropology.

In *Suicide*, Durkheim demonstrated how to use his sociological rules to explain a particular social fact. He chose the fact of suicide because it was an act that seemed so individualistic yet, explained sociologically, could be shown to have a strong social dimension. Durkheim correlated types of suicide with patterns of social integration. With mechanical solidarity there was “altruistic” suicide, whereby individuals dissolved themselves into the homogeneous group, while with organic solidarity there was “egoistic” suicide, whereby individuals engaged in a dramatic form of self-expression. When social solidarity was in flux—that is, neither mechanical nor organic—individuals could commit a third type of suicide, which was brought about by **anomie**, Durkheim's name for the feeling of alienation caused by the absence

of familiar social norms.

The purpose of Durkheim's fourth book, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, was to expose the social origins of religion. To Durkheim, the term "origins" meant something very different than it did to cultural evolutionists and other kinds of anthropologists whose orientation was diachronic and who considered the origin of something to be its source in the past. For Durkheim, the origin of something was its source in the group mind. Accordingly, the **elementary forms** of religion were collective representations of the collective consciousness of people who attached sacred meaning to moral principles and then gave those moral principles a social reality in order to make them persuasive. Some empiricists have found Durkheim's logic circular: collective representations demonstrate the existence of the collective consciousness, which is posited to demonstrate the existence of collective representations. But Durkheim was not a consistent empiricist. He was a rationalist who believed that knowledge could exist independent of observation. Rationalism was imparted to French structural anthropology when Durkheim's elementary forms of religion became Claude Lévi-Strauss's **elementary structures** of kinship.

For Durkheim, the origin of religion, and ultimately of society itself, lay in the impact of social ritual on individuals. His thesis was that "primitive man" (exemplified in particular by Aboriginal societies in Australia) experiences a sense of "effervescence" when interacting with his fellows that can be accounted for only by reference to a greater power existing outside the individual. Once the ritual has ended, and large clans have broken into smaller bands and dispersed to resume the mundane activities associated with "making a living," individuals long for the cascade of sentiment that they had encountered during these periods of togetherness. Durkheim enshrined this distinction between the ritual and the everyday in his oppositional concepts of the **sacred** and the **profane**. These terms are appropriate, because they convey the forms of activity and emotion that surround the pure and powerful occasions of ritual togetherness as opposed to those that indicate the routine, the mundane, and the "polluted." In particular, Durkheim took great pains to show how the effervescent sensations born in ritual are embodied in totems. These objects are, for Durkheim, powerful representations, or elementary forms, which bring these powerful sentiments to the surface of consciousness, even in the absence of ritual. Thus, they are icons *par excellence* of group integration and solidarity. Perhaps more importantly,

they serve to remind primitive societies of the greater reality existing just outside themselves, a reality that only fully makes itself felt during social ritual. It is with some justification, therefore, that anthropologists have equated some people's understanding of God with Durkheim's vision of society, for in *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* the concepts of God and society seem interchangeable.

In 1902, Durkheim was rewarded with the prestigious academic appointment as Chair of Education at the Sorbonne in Paris, where he came to exert considerable academic influence. A few years earlier he had founded the journal *Année Sociologique* to publish his work and the work of the growing number of his students. It is significantly through this journal that his theories became known to French and British anthropologists. Tragically, during World War I, many of Durkheim's students died, as did his son, a death that affected him deeply. In 1917, before the war ended, he himself died while recovering from a stroke.

Max Weber

Key Words: agency, Calvinist Protestantism, charismatic prophets, cosmological order, ethical, Eurocentric, ideational, inner-worldly asceticism, rationalized, relatively non-privileged, ritual, salvation, theodicy

In the nineteenth century, Durkheim employed an organismic analogy to understand how social groups cohere, and Marx understood control of the material conditions of life to be the engine driving human history. Both theorists, therefore, believed that forces existing outside the individual (psychosocial on the one hand, dialectical on the other) act to condition cultural meaning and structure social relations. In neither formulation is much room left for the creative **agency** of individuals, and, in fact, both Durkheim and Marx are often criticized for treating the subjects of their theories as homogenous drones, mindlessly obeying the relentless forces that shape and control every facet of their existence. In contrast, the late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century German theorist Max Weber (1864–1920) is credited with viewing the holistic individual—acting, thinking, feeling—as central to the creation, maintenance, and innovation of social and cultural forms. For this reason, his work is often thought of as idealistic, or **ideational**, and is frequently contrasted with the materialism of Marx. Such a characterization is misleading because the creative agency that Weber attributes to individuals is grounded nevertheless in the relations of production and reproduction in any given society. In part because his work so effectively synthesized the supposedly antithetical forces of idealism and materialism, Weber became deeply influential in anthropological writing of the later twentieth century.

Weber was the son of a prominent German politician and civil servant and grew up in a stimulating intellectual environment. In 1882, he enrolled as a law student at the University of Heidelberg, where he embellished his studies with economics, history, and theology. In 1894, he became a professor of economics at Freiburg University, the first of several academic appointments he held interspersed with other occupations. Early on, Weber developed an interest in social policy, and at the conclusion of World War I, he served as a consultant to committees drafting the Treaty of Versailles and the Weimar Constitution for postwar Germany. After the war, he resumed teaching but suffered opposition from right-wing students, dying shortly

thereafter of pneumonia.

In two of his most important works, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1920) and (posthumously) *The Sociology of Religion* (1922), Weber presented his strategy for understanding how societies develop through time. Although his ideas were essentially evolutionist, they bore little resemblance to the unilineal theories of his nineteenth-century contemporaries, such as Edward Burnett Tylor or Lewis Henry Morgan. Rather than reducing the great variety of social forms in the world to a single unidirectional model that charts social evolutionary change from the “primitive” through the “civilized,” Weber sought a theory that placed existing beliefs and structures in particular historical contexts. For this reason, he is often thought of as a multilineal evolutionist whose theory accounts for the great diversity of human life but resists the temptation to rank this diversity according to a rigidly **Eurocentric** scale of norms and values.

The principal elements of Weber’s schema may be outlined as follows. Complex societies arise from a progressive differentiation and intensification of labour, which in turn gives rise to a stratified hierarchy of social and economic classes. As a given social and historical environment grows in complexity, so too do the material inequities between these classes. These inequities, notably between the ruling elite and military classes and what Weber calls the **relatively non-privileged** classes of urban artisans and merchants, lead the latter to experience both a profound sense of alienation from sociopolitical power and a growing awareness of economic marginalization. This discrepancy between the world of their experience and that of their expectation (what *is*, as opposed to what *should be*—the problem of evil, or **theodicy**) is embodied in and expressed through an explicitly religious framework.

This point is crucial to Weber’s model because, in his view, religion is the engine that drives social transformation through time. The merchant class’s despair and alienation from power foster deep anxieties about the apparent senselessness of the world: if one lives in accordance with a good and powerful deity’s wishes, fulfilling all **ritual** observances and prescribed ritual behaviour, why does the world continue to be so problematic? This dilemma cries out, Weber maintains, for resolution. There is a need, using his terminology, for **salvation** from the world. Coming to the heart of his formulation of social change, Weber believes that this salvation is

accomplished through the radical restructuring of beliefs about the world, which in turn prescribes **ethical** behaviours to bring people into accord with this ethical new vision.

Inner-worldly asceticism is the central disposition involved in this process because it entails “removing” oneself from corrupt worldly indulgences while (paradoxically) remaining within the world of human activity. For Weber, inner-worldly asceticism opposes the “outer-worldly” ascetics—monks, hermits, and others—who seek literally to escape the social world and its influences by retreating to special spaces (e.g., monasteries, deserts) where worldly things have no power or authority. By refraining from indulgence in specific corruptions that inhere in the world, the inner-worldly ascetic remains virtuous (by Judeo-Christian standards) even while participating in a world that is inherently corrupt. Crucially for Western society, material prosperity not only is excluded from this catalogue of iniquity but also becomes a hallmark of one’s standing vis-à-vis divine will. The stimulus for such reformulation and renewal is understood to come from especially creative individuals, **charismatic prophets**, who generally claim to receive a new revelation of divine Truth that will reintegrate belief and action and in so doing restore psychosocial harmony to humanity.

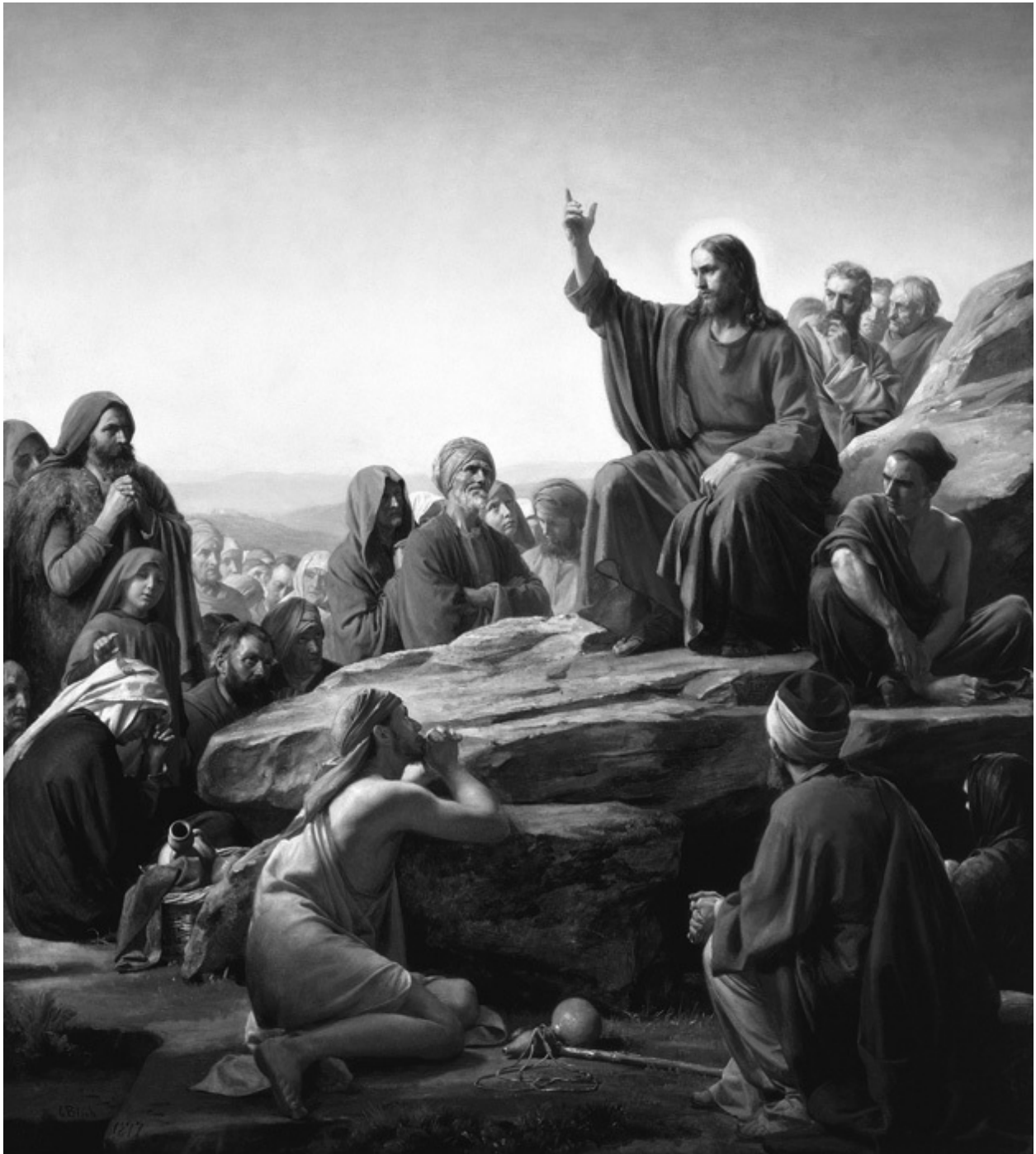


FIGURE 1.16 In Awe of Jesus Christ: Jesus is a prime example of Max Weber's definition of a charismatic leader.

BLOCH, Carl. "Sermon on the Mount." Image courtesy of the Hope Gallery and Museum of Fine Art.

For Weber, the most significant example of an embodiment of this process occurred in the form of **Calvinist Protestantism**, an urban merchant's religion that **rationalized** a new relationship between human beings and God. In this way, the French theologian John Calvin (1509–64) is to be considered a prophet, bearing a new vision of human life. Under this new covenant “revealed” to Calvin, individuals are directed to recreate heaven on Earth through hard work, as prescribed by God in Scripture, and obedience to the divine will. In this model, middle-class professionals—namely, merchants and artisans—are elevated to a position of ethical superiority; no longer are they to be ideologically dominated by ruling elites. Rather, urban merchants and artisans come to view themselves as a community of believers united by certain ethical tenets, adherence to which will certainly lead to a more materially rewarding and emotionally satisfying life. Therefore, a merchant might look to his material prosperity as a sign of God's grace, or lack thereof. The burgeoning culture of sixteenth-century Renaissance commerce, once linked in this way to a **cosmological order**, became an increasingly compelling blueprint for action in the world. If people behaved in a certain way, in accordance with God's will, they could expect to be materially rewarded in the here and now, and spiritually justified in the hereafter. Small wonder, then, that this new system of meaning and action ultimately resulted in the global triumph of industrial capitalism.

Weber's ideas about social evolution have been especially useful to anthropologists of recent generations because there has been an increasing reluctance to view societies and cultures as the static, pristine organisms of Durkheimian theory. Moreover, in recent years the discipline has become more concerned with issues pertaining to the creative agency of individuals, the cultural worlds they construct and inhabit, and the various permutations of consensus and conflict that exist within and between societies. Weber's ideas really resurfaced in the 1970s and 1980s with the schools known as political economy and postmodernism. Until then, they were eclipsed by the more fashionable ideas of Durkheim and, to a lesser extent, Marx.

Ferdinand de Saussure

Key Words: diachronic, historical linguistics, *langue*, *parole*, polysemous, sign, signified, signifier, synchronic

Ferdinand de Saussure (1857–1913) is among the most important precursors to twentieth-century linguistic and cultural anthropology. He is also one of the least celebrated figures in these disciplines and among the least read. In part, this is doubtless due to the fact that he rarely published during his lifetime and the bulk of his legacy is vested in a posthumous collection of lectures compiled and published by a number of his students. Another reason for his relative obscurity outside linguistic circles probably relates to his low-key, generally conventional (even uneventful) academic career. As Jonathan Culler has put it, he seems to have had “no great intellectual crises, decisive moments of insight or conversion, or momentous personal adventures.” Nevertheless, Saussure remains one of the founding fathers—if not *the* founding father—of the modern discipline of linguistics as well as diverse streams of cultural and linguistic anthropology, influencing in different ways such important figures as Edward Sapir, Claude Lévi-Strauss, and Pierre Bourdieu.

A contemporary of Marx, Freud, Durkheim, and Weber, Saussure was born in Geneva, Switzerland, in 1857. A precocious student and fluent in several languages, his early writings on the system of language, composed when he was only 15, drew the interest of older scholars who saw in the adolescent an emerging new talent. Despite this evident talent for the study of language, Saussure’s family had strong ties to the natural sciences, and he first studied physics and chemistry at the University of Geneva before reverting to his early passion for language in completing his bachelor’s degree. After two years of studying **historical linguistics** in Leipzig and another two in Berlin, in 1880 Saussure was awarded a doctorate and moved to Paris where he entered the École Pratique des Hautes Études as “Maître de conférences” (lecturer) in historical linguistics. In 1891, he was named Chevalier of the Legion of Honour—a token of the deep esteem in which his Parisian colleagues held him—and accepted a professorship in Geneva, where he taught at his alma mater.

The work for which Saussure is best known was produced between 1907

and 1911 in the form of three consecutive lecture series on “general linguistics.” Seminal though these lectures were, his insights into linguistic analysis remained unpublished at the time of his death in 1913. It remained to a number of his most devoted colleagues and students, especially linguists Charles Bally (1865–1947) and Albert Sechehaye (1870–1946), to redact and publish a series of notes taken over the course of Saussure’s lectures, together with a number of his own lecture notes. These were published in 1916 under the title *Cours de linguistique générale*. While this work was an immediate sensation in continental linguistic circles, Saussure’s influence among anglophile linguists and anthropologists was understandably inhibited by the late translation of the *Cours* into English in 1974.

Much of Saussure’s innovation stems from his deep misgivings about the adequacy of linguistic theory in the late nineteenth century. In particular, language scholars of this era were more interested in tracking the genealogical lineages of discrete language forms (especially of the Indo-European language family) over time in order to “reconstruct” them and discover their temporal interrelatedness within a grand “tree” of many branches. Never, in his estimation, did his peers stop to ask the most pertinent question of all: what is language? Saussure’s answer is at face value deceptive in its simplicity. A language, he proposes, is a system of “signs” in which speech communicates ideas. The **sign**, as Saussure understands it, is made up of two distinct elements: the **signifier** (that which communicates meaning) and the **signified** (the concept communicated by the signifier). Without the capacity for communicating meanings as understood by a community of speakers, a sign cannot be linguistically relevant. This insight, obvious though it might appear, was little short of revolutionary for its focus on the *systematic* quality of language. By necessity, the sign is arbitrary, meaning there is no “natural” connection between the signifier and signified. If one uses the English signifier “tree” to denote the object that one recognizes to be a tree, this is obviously a different signifier than its Latin equivalent, “*arbor*.” Different though they are, both convey the same meaning. In other words, there is nothing intrinsic about the sequence of sounds in “tree” that connects to its referent. Its meaning varies from one sign system, or language, to the next. For Saussure, a few exceptions to this principle *do* exist—most famously onomatopoeia, in which the signifying sound seems to imitate or mimic the signified (for instance, the English word-sound “meow” signifying the sound made by a cat).

A number of important consequences stem from these observations, which in and of themselves suggest little of the true complexity behind language. Discrete languages are not, of course, simple collections of signs. Rather, each language exists in the *system of relations* among its many signs. It is not the fact that each language encompasses different groups of signs that matters but that each organizes the relations among signs differently. It is for this reason that each language presents a basically different vision of the world. An old adage of anthropological lore (originating with Franz Boas) has it that the Inuit possess many different words for which anglophone Euro-Americans have one—"snow"—because there is a more complex relationship between the Inuit language community and the natural circumstances of their environment that requires a variegated knowledge of what is signified. In other words, whether snow is known primarily through its aridity, weight, shape, texture, position in relation to the ground, and so on actually *makes* a different world for the Inuit than what anglophone Euro-Americans might be expected to experience. Technically, this analogy may be inaccurate because linguists have demonstrated that the allegedly "many" Inuit words for snow actually reflect fundamental differences in grammar between English and Inuit, in particular in terms of what constitutes a "word." Nevertheless, the general point Saussure makes about the system or structure of language influencing experience had an important legacy in French and British social anthropology and among early American linguistic anthropologists in the work of Edward Sapir and Benjamin Lee Whorf. Note, too, that the meaning of "snow" (or any other concept) can only be fully grasped *in relation* to other features of weather—rain, hail, sunshine, and so on. In the absence of these, snow cannot signify what we understand it as signifying because there is no way of distinguishing it from other objects in the world.

Another important and related point Saussure makes about signs is that they are not fixed or stable. Instead, they are endlessly shifting, creating new meanings and new social contexts. In English, there are many examples that spring readily to mind. Until several decades ago, the word "gay" invoked the concept of happiness or joviality. In contemporary usage, the term is seldom employed except in reference to homosexuality. The signifier has stayed the same, but that which is signified has been transformed. Muddying these waters still further, if one says, "I'm planning on buying new shoes today," a reasonable reply might be to ask, "What type of shoes?" The signifier "shoe" references not just a particular kind of footwear but a genre of footwear;

boots, stilettos, sneakers, and loafers all qualify depending on contextual factors. Signifiers are thus **polysemous** in character—they generate meanings that are utterly different from one another depending on such factors as speakers, listeners, and social and cultural context. It is possible to hear anglophones of an older generation still using the word “gay” to denote its earlier significance, whereas few under the age of 50 could now use the term without being aware of its plural significance.

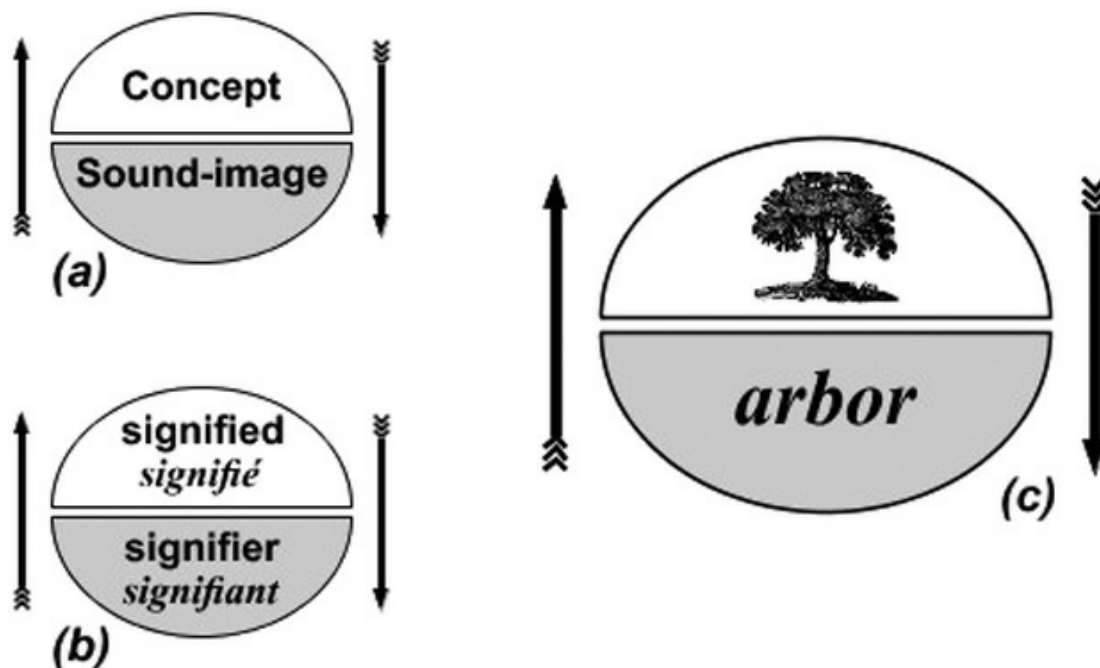


FIGURE 1.17 *Arbor*: *Arbor*, or in English *tree*, is both a collection of sounds and a concept, illustrating Ferdinand de Saussure’s distinction between the signifier and the signified.

From *Course in General Linguistics*. Reprinted by permission of Philosophical Library Inc.

This quality by which the signifier and signified “mutate” according to usage leads to another important contribution of Saussure to linguistic theory—one that continued to be debated several generations after his death. This is the difference between a language system as a theoretical object (that is, each language consists of a system that is intangible) and a language as it is actually used—with all its incoherences, exceptions, and shortcuts. However

“objective” a linguistic structure of relations might appear on paper, it obviously cannot account for language as spoken in its concrete manifestations. One might learn the “rules” of the language system but choose to ignore them in use. The results would not necessarily be incoherence but simply the imperfect outward expression of a coherent system. Saussure refers to this important distinction with the terms *langue*, the system of a language, and *parole*, objective instances of speech. When individuals are socialized in the conventions of a language, they learn the *langue*—the network of interrelated signs that permits both the understanding and reproduction of language. In contrast, *parole* involves the creative combination by individual speakers of signs within this system to express particular kinds of meanings. Of this difference, Saussure says that “we are separating what is social from what is individual and what is essential from what is ancillary or accidental.” For Saussure, it is the *langue* that must occupy the attention of linguists, rather than *parole*, which tends to distract from this all-important goal of grasping the essential rules whereby signs are related to each other.

Like his contemporary Émile Durkheim, Saussure was also a key figure in distinguishing the *synchronic* from the *diachronic*. Whereas linguists of previous generations had been more concerned with tracking the historical development of languages and language families (diachrony), Saussure recognized that however contingent and evolving language forms might be, they could be studied only through the mapping of relations among meaningful units in an integrated, idealized, and unchanging structure (synchrony). Like Durkheim’s perspective, Saussure’s concern with linguistic statics was in later generations overemphasized at the expense of interest in language transformation—a development that process-oriented anthropological linguistics only began to redress in the second half of the twentieth century. The tendency to reify language *and* culture as structures of interrelated signs can be deduced from the perspective of many anthropologists working in the mid-1900s who produced an influential body of theory that includes the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, French structural anthropology, and different branches of ethnoscience. While later theorists, especially Pierre Bourdieu, have attempted to do away with what they rightly regard as a false dichotomy between social statics and change, or structure and agency, the very fact that history and diachrony are perceived as absent from the study of language says much about the enduring influence of

Ferdinand de Saussure.

PART TWO

The Earlier Twentieth Century

To varying degrees, earlier twentieth-century anthropological theories represent a departure from those of the nineteenth century as new theorists sought to distance themselves from the unilineal evolutionary and hereditarian doctrines of their predecessors. In so doing, they drew for inspiration upon the theories of, among others, Sigmund Freud, Émile Durkheim, Max Weber, and Ferdinand de Saussure. The theories of Karl Marx were largely sidelined until their revival later in the century. Under the influence of strong anthropological personalities, modern American, French, and British national traditions emerged. These traditions are known as American cultural anthropology, French structural anthropology, and British social anthropology.

American Cultural Anthropology

Key Words: four-field approach, holistic

Under the leadership of Franz Boas and the first generations of his students, the professionalization of academic anthropology in the United States involved the cultivation of a distinctively **holistic**, “**four-field approach**” to the study of human life, which generally stressed the significance of historical change and the relativistic character of Euro-American and non-Western cultural norms and practices. Together with its pre-eminent geographical focus on Native American peoples, these were the epistemological foundations upon which theory in American anthropology was erected in the generations after Boas, helping to set the burgeoning field apart from its British and French counterparts as a distinctive expression of anthropological knowledge.

Franz Boas

Key Words: cephalic index, *Geisteswissenschaften*, historical particularism, idiographic, *Naturwissenschaften*, nomothetic, salvage ethnography, Southwest School

Almost singlehandedly, Franz Boas (1858–1942) launched American anthropology on the course it maintained throughout much of the twentieth century. At the outset of the twenty-first century, his influence continues to be felt in the curricula of most North American anthropology departments, which as a group continue to adhere to the four-field approach he pioneered.

Boas was born and educated in Germany, where he earned a doctoral degree in physics based on research into the optical properties of colour. He took a field trip to northern Canada to study Native peoples’ perception of colour and while there converted to geography and then anthropology. Boas next visited the United States, where he spent time in New York City before becoming a curator at the new Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago. There, he built up an impressive collection of artifacts from the Pacific Northwest Coast, where he did ethnographic and linguistic field research among the Kwakiutl and related Native groups. In the aftermath of a dispute

with museum administrators, Boas left Chicago and joined the faculty of Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts. A short time later, he moved back to New York and joined the faculty of Columbia University, where he remained for almost half a century.

Boas was principally a cultural anthropologist, but he also did important work in linguistic anthropology, physical anthropology, and, to a limited extent, archaeological anthropology. He was an extraordinarily self-disciplined and prolific scholar, publishing more than 700 articles and books. He also had a strong hand in establishing and strengthening professional organizations such as the American Anthropological Association and its flagship professional journal, *American Anthropologist*. The list of anthropologists trained by Boas really does read like a *Who's Who*. For example, in general anthropology and ethnography, there were Melville Herskovits (1895–1963), E. Adamson Hoebel (1906–93), Alfred Louis Kroeber, and Robert Lowie; in psychological anthropology, Ruth Benedict and Margaret Mead; in American Indian studies, Alexander Goldenweiser (1880–1940), Paul Radin (1883–1959), and Clark Wissler; and in anthropological linguistics, Edward Sapir. When these students established other anthropology departments—Herskovits at Northwestern University, Sapir at the University of Chicago, and Kroeber and Lowie at the University of California at Berkeley—the Boasian approach to anthropology spread across the United States.



FIGURE 2.1 Getting into Character: Franz Boas (1858–1942) poses for a figure in an 1895 exhibit at the United States National Museum of Natural History.

National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution, NEG MNH 8300: Franz Boas posing for figure in USNM exhibit entitled “Hamats’a coming out of secret room.”

In spite of all this personal influence, it is sometimes said that Boas established no anthropological “school.” This is because he did not make formulating new theory a high priority; rather, he spent much time criticizing

old theory from the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, his approach to anthropology had pronounced characteristics. First and foremost, Boas was an ardent empiricist, much more rigorous than his late-nineteenth-century American predecessors. He was motivated to record as much information as possible about Native North American cultures before they were “lost” through assimilation to expanding Euro-American cultures. This missionary-like zeal for **salvage ethnography** inspired students and attracted them to anthropology, especially students who, like Boas, were prone to social activism.

Furthermore, Boas was an arch-inductivist, urging anthropologists to “let the facts speak for themselves,” reject deductive schemes, and avoid premature generalizations. He was particularly critical of the comparative method of classical cultural evolutionists, who made unwarranted use of present-day ethnographic information in reconstructions of the past. Nobody, Boas protested, was “living in the Stone Age.” Because he considered evolutionary explanations “one-sided,” he urged anthropologists to consider diffusion as another cause of culture change. Overall, Boas wanted detailed, well-rounded stories of cultural development. In *The Rise of Anthropological Theory* (1968), anthropologist Marvin Harris labelled Boas’s approach to anthropology **historical particularism**—“historical” because Boas described the present in terms of the past, and “particular” because he considered the history of each culture to be unique. Other anthropologists have disagreed with this label, focusing instead on Boas’s overarching commitment to both natural and human science.



FIGURE 2.2 The Senior Franz Boas: Boas became the towering personality in early-twentieth-century American anthropology.

Photograph by Blackstone Studios, New York.

Boas was heir to the tradition of Enlightenment egalitarianism, eclipsed

during the nineteenth century by a surge of national chauvinism, hereditarianism, and racist views. Racism was particularly strong in nineteenth-century American anthropology, where Samuel George Morton (1799–1851), Josiah Clark Nott (1804–73), and other members of the “American School” espoused racial polygenism, the doctrine that races are immutable, separately created species. The American School linked polygenism to the defence of black slavery in the antebellum American South. Rejecting the legacy of the American school, Boas insisted that environment dominates heredity in the determination of cultural differences. Having suffered prejudice as a Jew growing up in Christian surroundings, he was determined to shape anthropology into an academic discipline that would demonstrate to the world how race, language, and culture are causally unlinked. He did this creatively with a physical anthropological study of head shape. In nineteenth-century anthropology, head shape—in particular, **cephalic index**, the ratio of head width to head breadth—was considered “fixed” and therefore, because the head contains the brain, represented a fixed measure of intelligence. Using sophisticated statistical techniques and a large body of data, Boas documented how head shape had changed in only one generation, as the American-born children of immigrants benefited from improved health and nutrition and other culturally conditioned inputs. Although some anthropologists have questioned the magnitude of this documented change, Boas’s landmark study remains an important beginning of the attempt to end racism in modern anthropology.

Having come to cultural anthropology from physics, the rigorous Boas might have been expected to model cultural anthropology on natural science. This was not the case. In Germany, he had been influenced by Wilhelm Dilthey (1833–1911) and members of the Neo-Kantian **Southwest School** of German philosophy. This group derived their ideas from philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724–1804), who taught that experience is filtered through innate categories of the mind. Neo-Kantians reformulated Kant’s teachings into the proposition that there are two kinds of sciences: **Naturwissenschaften**, or natural sciences, and **Geisteswissenschaften**, or human sciences of mental phenomena. The natural sciences could aim to be **nomothetic**, or seek explanatory generalizations and laws. The human sciences, however, had to concern themselves with mental phenomena, the core of human existence, and, according to Neo-Kantians, could aim to be only **idiographic**, or seek descriptions of particular events. When Boas

converted from physics to anthropology, he had this distinction between generalizing and particularizing sciences in mind. As a result, he stressed culture as a mental construct, paving the way for psychological anthropology and later brands of American anthropology that represented culture as something carried around in people's heads.

Boas was a social activist. In commenting on world affairs, he was an internationalist, opposing narrow-minded nationalism and overzealous patriotism. During World War I, he published a letter in *The Nation* denouncing four unnamed anthropologists for serving as American spies. For this action, the American Anthropological Association censured him, a censure not rescinded until 2004. In the late 1930s, Boas undertook a study of American high-school textbooks and found that the majority of them misrepresented the concept of race, one-fifth of them promoting what might be called white supremacy. To counter this attitude, he asked his student Ruth Benedict to translate his ideas on race into a popular pamphlet, published later as *The Races of Mankind* (1943). At this time, during World War II, Nazism was denouncing "Jewish science." Boas replied that there was only one science, the universal science of humankind. For speaking out like this, he is regarded by subsequent generations of activist anthropologists as a towering pioneer. In 1942, while Boas was having lunch at Columbia University, he suddenly slumped over and died. Anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss, who was sitting next to him, recalled later that he had witnessed the death of an intellectual giant and the end of an era in anthropology. Surviving Boas, however, was his legacy of commitment to what anthropologists later called public anthropology, which inspired many of his students.

Robert Lowie and Alfred Louis Kroeber

Key Words: great man theory of history, superorganic

The first two anthropologists to earn doctoral degrees under Boas at Columbia were Robert Lowie and Alfred Louis Kroeber.

Robert Lowie (1883–1957) was born in Vienna before immigrating with his parents to New York City. In New York, he grew up in German-American surroundings, aspiring to a career in chemistry but switching to anthropology when poor manual dexterity called his ability to conduct laboratory experiments into question. In his autobiography, Lowie explains

how growing up in two cultures, one German and the other American, made him a “marginal man,” not fully at home in either, or any, culture. At the same time, this aspect of his upbringing primed him for participant-observation fieldwork. Lowie earned a doctoral degree on the basis of fieldwork among American Native peoples. In 1917, he joined the faculty of the University of California at Berkeley, remaining there until his retirement in 1950. Lowie’s first important book was *Primitive Society* (1920), in which he criticized the cultural evolutionary approach, especially that of Lewis Henry Morgan. Following Boas, Lowie rejected the “one-sided” explanations of cultural evolutionists, although he also rejected extreme versions of diffusionism. There was, he insisted, no one determinant of culture. In *History of Ethnological Theory* (1937), he pursued this same theme, cautioning anthropologists against theoretical extremism of any kind. Behind his position were intellectual influences shared with Boas, namely, the Southwest School of German philosophy and an uncompromising empiricism, in Lowie’s case derived from philosopher Ernst Mach (1838–1916). The Lowie program for anthropology consisted of undoing the ethnographic analyses of cultural evolutionists and redoing them in the framework of Boasian historical particularism. In *Skull Wars*, David Hurst Thomas casts Lowie’s arch-empiricist agenda in an unflattering light, showing how it led Lowie to deny credence to Native Americans’ oral history of their past. This denial raises the larger issue of who “owns” the prehistoric past: archaeologists and anthropologists or Native Americans themselves? Answering this question became a preoccupation of later anthropological theorists.

A long-time California colleague of Lowie was Alfred Louis Kroeber (1876–1960). Kroeber was born and raised by immigrant parents in New York City, where, like Lowie, he experienced both German and American cultures. His first love was literature, but this changed when he met Boas and decided to take his doctorate in anthropology. Reflecting his literary background, Kroeber’s dissertation was a study of patterns, or configurations, of American Native style. In 1901, Kroeber moved to California to become curator of the Academy of Sciences Museum. He soon joined the University of California at Berkeley, where he stayed until his retirement in 1946. Kroeber is well known for his textbook *Anthropology* (1923), his ethnographic compendium *Handbook of the Indians of California* (1925), and his theoretical treatise *Configurations of Culture Growth* (1944). While Lowie

remained true to Boasian anthropology, Kroeber departed from Boas in an unexpected way. This happened when he promoted the concept of the **superorganic**.



FIGURE 2.3 Robert Lowie (1883–1957) in His Library: Lowie drew inspiration from books as well as from field notes.

BANC PIC 1980.003–fALB. Reproduced by permission of the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

The concept of the superorganic goes back to Herbert Spencer and Émile Durkheim and, after Kroeber, was “revisited” by anthropologist Leslie White. It represents an emphatic statement of the importance of environment over heredity, “nurture” over “nature,” or culture over biology. It also represents an effort to give social-scientific disciplines such as anthropology a particular

identity by showing that they have something special to study—culture, a realm *sui generis*, or unto itself, separate from psychology and “above” biology. Kroeber first published his ideas about the superorganic in 1917 in an article in *American Anthropologist*. In the article, he stressed the power of culture to shape human behaviour, arguing against the **great man theory of history**, which stressed the power of individuals. Using historical examples, he sought to show that great men were only great because they happened to be in the right place at the right time.

Instead of proposing cultural laws that determine behaviour, Kroeber proposed cultural patterns, or trends. To illustrate the power of trends, he chose fashion, commonly considered to be subject to artistic whim and the caprice of the fashion industry. Instead, he countered, fashion features seemingly as capricious as hem length, lapel shape, and the number and placement of buttons all change cyclically, precisely enough to be plotted on graphs. The implication was that while people might *think* they are creative geniuses or manipulators, in fact they are creatures of culture, implementing changes for which the cultural time is ripe. The superorganic is one example—some say a caricature—of a scientific contrasted with a humanistic orientation for anthropology. It was an unexpected orientation for Kroeber, a student of literature, especially since he was taught by Boas, who opposed one-sided explanations.



FIGURE 2.4 Alfred Louis Kroeber and Friends: A young Kroeber (1876–1960), centre, poses with Ishi, the last Yana Indian, right, and translator Sam Batwai in San Francisco in 1911.

Courtesy of the Phoebe A. Hearst Museum of Anthropology and the Regents of the University of California (Catalogue No. 13-944).

Throughout his career, Kroeber vacillated between the superorganic and traditional Boasian approaches. In 1944, he published *Configurations of Culture Growth*, a book on which he had been working almost day and night for years. This book was a survey of major world civilizations, in which Kroeber tried to determine whether there were any overall trends, or trajectories, of civilized development. His finding was largely negative: each civilization appeared to have its own unique trajectory—a historical twist to the Boasian doctrine of cultural relativism. After *Configurations*, Kroeber gradually retreated from the concept of the superorganic and returned to the Boasian fold.



FIGURE 2.5 The Senior Alfred Louis Kroeber: Kroeber was mainly a configurationalist, but he also pursued the idea of the superorganic.

Photograph by Blackstone Studios, New York.

A famous, or infamous, anthropological episode reveals Kroeber's own

psychological configuration. In 1911, a disoriented man speaking an undecipherable tongue appeared in the wilderness in northern California. Kroeber took a keen interest in the man and arranged for him to visit San Francisco, deciding that he was the sole survivor of a little-known Native American group, the Yana. Kroeber named the man Ishi, for “man,” and declared him to be the last pristine Native American alive. Ishi moved into the San Francisco Museum of Anthropology, where he greeted the public and consulted with anthropologists, in the process learning to speak limited English. Through interacting with Ishi for five years, Kroeber learned about the culture of his vanished ancestors. Sadly, Ishi developed tuberculosis and died in 1916.

At the time of Ishi’s death, Kroeber was living temporarily in New York and Europe and had become engaged by the psychoanalytic psychology of Sigmund Freud. Troubled at the news, he sent a letter to his colleagues in California instructing them to respect the traditions of Ishi’s ancestors by cremating his body and burying it in an urn. There was to be no autopsy. Unfortunately, Kroeber’s letter arrived after an autopsy had already been performed and Ishi’s brain removed for preservation and study. Kroeber was distraught and entered a period of professional self-doubt. He remained in New York to undergo psychoanalysis and, when he returned to California, temporarily practised psychoanalysis himself. For the rest of his life he rarely spoke or wrote about the Ishi affair. After his death, his wife Theodora Kroeber published a book about it, *Ishi in Two Worlds: A Biography of the Last Wild Indian in North America* (1961). Her book kept the memory of Ishi alive.

Many years later, it came to light that Ishi’s brain had been sent to the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC, where it remained in storage and largely forgotten for decades. In 1999, a coalition of interested parties, including the Butte County Native American Cultural Committee, located the brain. In anthropology circles a heated discussion ensued about what to do and, in retrospect, what to think about the events surrounding Ishi’s death. In 2000, leaders of the Redding Rancheria and Pit River groups, which claim descent from the Yana, took possession of the brain to return it to California and rebury it with Ishi’s exhumed ashes in a secret location. The whole Ishi episode, spanning nine decades, attests to the dramatic shift in attitudes toward stewardship of the Native American past that has taken place since Kroeber’s time.

Margaret Mead and Ruth Benedict

Key Words: configurationalism, culture-at-a-distance, enculturation, gestalt, national character, psychological anthropology

As American cultural anthropology developed, the search for cultural patterns launched by Kroeber, sometimes called **configurationalism**, took a turn into **psychological anthropology**, a uniquely American contribution to anthropological theory. This school was rooted in the Boasian teaching that culture is a mental phenomenon; was popularized by his most famous students, Margaret Mead and Ruth Benedict; and was taken in new directions by anthropologists reacting to the psychology of Sigmund Freud.



FIGURE 2.6 Margaret Mead (1901–78): An outspoken advocate of cultural relativism, Mead was the most famous American anthropologist of the mid-twentieth century.

Photograph by Blackstone Studios, New York.

Early psychological anthropologists were curious about the relationship between culture and personality, namely, how individuals contribute to culture and how, through **enculturation**, culture contributes to, or shapes, individuals. Psychological anthropologists understood that this relationship would differ from culture to culture. Under the influence of Boas, they began to incorporate observations of human feelings, attitudes, and other psychological states into their fieldwork and publications. Anthropology became livelier and more engaging as it put on a human face.

The anthropologist primarily responsible for this transformation was Margaret Mead (1901–78). The precocious daughter of academically oriented parents, Mead grew up in and around Philadelphia, attended college for one year in the American Midwest, and then headed east for what she expected would be a more cosmopolitan education at Barnard College, which was affiliated with Columbia University. An aspiring poet and writer, she gave up literature when she decided that she lacked the talent for commercial success and gravitated instead to Boas and his colleague Ruth Benedict, who convinced her that anthropology “mattered.” Boas was deeply involved with his effort to use anthropology to counteract hereditarian doctrines, one of which was Freudian psychology, then growing in academic popularity. Freud had pronounced that certain phases of human psychological development were fixed by nature and were universal. Boas disagreed, believing that Freud’s doctrine was culture-bound, or ethnocentric. He directed Mead to select a psychological phase of individual development, study it in a non-Western culture, and demonstrate that its manifestation there was different than in the West. Mead selected (or ended up with) female adolescence in Samoa, a group of islands in the South Pacific. She lived there for several months with the family of a missionary, venturing out into villages to interview a select number of adolescent Samoan girls. The result of this pioneering fieldwork was the first of her many books, *Coming of Age in Samoa* (1928), an all-time anthropology “classic.”

The message of *Coming of Age in Samoa* was that female adolescence in the islands was a psychologically untroubled transition from girlhood to womanhood, during which time Samoan adolescents were spared the “normal” trials and tribulations of sexual awakening because they, unlike their North American counterparts, had been sexually permissive as girls. The conclusion was that adolescence was not troubled by hereditary nature, and the inference was that American adolescents would be less troubled if

Americans adopted a more permissive attitude toward sex. Mead's book was an immediate commercial success, garnering public attention because of its bold and controversial pronouncements. The book launched her lifelong career as spokesperson for liberal causes, preaching tolerance and understanding and how learning about exotic behaviour in faraway places provided an opportunity to reflect on "normal" behaviour back home. In this capacity, she became the most famous anthropologist of the twentieth century and the anthropologist primarily responsible for giving anthropology its reputation for cultural relativism.

Mead's other groundbreaking books were *Growing Up in New Guinea* (1930) and *Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies* (1935), which featured ethnographic examples of how sex roles are enculturated and, like adolescence, not programmed by nature. In some of her early work, Mead collaborated with her second husband, New Zealand anthropologist Reo Fortune (1903–79), and later she collaborated further with her third husband, British anthropologist and psychological researcher Gregory Bateson (1904–80); her first husband was minister-turned-archaeologist Luther Cressman (1897–1994). Mead also maintained an intimate friendship with Ruth Benedict, who encouraged her to persevere and provided counsel in times of distress. She, Benedict, and linguist Edward Sapir were all close friends, sharing literary efforts and experimenting with the application of psychological labels to cultures and individuals, including fellow anthropologists. Sapir was disappointed when Mead rejected his proposal of marriage.

In 1982, four years after Mead's death, Australian ethnographer Derek Freeman (1916–2001) published a critical account of her Samoan research in his book *Margaret Mead and Samoa: The Making and Unmaking of an Anthropological Myth*, following it up in 1999 with *The Fateful Hoaxing of Margaret Mead: A Historical Analysis of Her Samoan Research*. Freeman took Mead to task (posthumously) for being methodologically superficial and for failing to study Samoan history, which, according to Freeman, involved sexual violence and turmoil that belie Mead's ethnographic portrait of Samoa as a peaceable, sexual paradise. In Freeman's account, Mead was a naïve product of Boas, who pushed her too hard to do research that would turn out the way he wanted. Freeman's books sparked a vigorous and protracted debate among his, and Mead's, defenders and detractors, creating a small cottage industry of polemical scholarship.



FIGURE 2.7 Ruth Benedict (1887–1948): Benedict, a configurationalist, was a leading theoretician of the American culture-and-personality school.

Photograph by Blackstone Studios, New York.

When Mead arrived at Columbia, Ruth Benedict (1887–1948) was

already there. Benedict had studied literature at Vassar College, taught high school, and, like Mead, reluctantly abandoned aspirations to be a commercial poet and writer. As a child, she had been introspective and withdrawn, suffering from impaired hearing that made her feel cut off from the outside world. Some who knew her called her “otherworldly.” Benedict wanted to write biographies of early feminists, but she was unsuccessful in having her first manuscript published. Seeking to fill her life with new meaning, she enrolled in an anthropology course at the New School for Social Research in New York City, where she met Franz Boas. Finding anthropology to be an outlet for her creativity and an intellectual vehicle to explore the underpinnings of her own sense of cultural alienation, she chose anthropology as her career. She did fieldwork under Kroeber, who introduced her to configurationalism, and then returned to Columbia to teach with Boas, helping to train Mead and other distinguished students.

Like Mead, Benedict was interested in the relationship between culture and personality. But while Mead described the culturally conditioned personalities of individuals, Benedict described the personalities of whole cultures. According to her, each culture had its own personality configuration, or **gestalt**. Compelling illustrations of this approach were the focus of her book *Patterns of Culture* (1934), for decades a venerated bestseller. In it, Benedict contrasted the personalities of three cultures: the Kwakiutl of the Pacific Northwest, the Zuñi of the American Southwest, and the Dobuans of the South Pacific. Borrowing names from German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900), she characterized the Kwakiutl as “Dionysian” because they appeared megalomaniacal and prone to excess, staging vision quests involving self-torture and potlatch ceremonies with conspicuous consumption and destruction of material goods. In contrast, the Zuñi were “Apollonian” because they appeared peaceable and restrained by moderation, with low-key ceremonies that reined in sexual licence. On the basis of ethnographic research conducted by Reo Fortune, Benedict characterized the Dobuans as “paranoid” because they appeared preoccupied with sorcery and suspicious of one another for stealing sweet potatoes. Benedict explained how these three cases illustrated the power of culture to shape divergent normative personalities, resulting in divergent definitions of “deviance.” In typical Boasian fashion, she concluded that, because what was deviant in one culture could be normative in another, deviance was not determined by nature.

After *Patterns of Culture*, Benedict continued to implement the Boasian mandate for anthropology by promoting cultural relativism and combating ethnocentrism and racism both intellectually and politically. To show that the concept of race was scientifically weak and politically destructive, she wrote *Race: Science and Politics* (1945), and during World War II she joined other anthropologists in helping to defeat Nazism and the Axis powers by working for the American federal government in Washington, DC. This was at a time when anthropologists helping the government at war was much less controversial than it became during the Vietnam War and, more recently, the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq. A result of Benedict's morally patriotic effort was her book *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword* (1946), a study of Japanese national character. During the World War II era, other **national character** studies—sometimes called **culture-at-a-distance** because they had to be done without the benefit of fieldwork—lost credibility when anthropologists made grandiose generalizations about the ability of childhood personality to shape the cultural behaviour of adults. An infamous case in point was Geoffrey Gorer (1905–85), who attributed the “obsessive-compulsive” culture of Japan to premature toilet-training and the “manic-depressive” culture of Russia to prolonged infant swaddling. These theoretical debasements of the psychological approach were caused, in part, by reckless application of the psychology of Sigmund Freud.

Mead and Benedict were the two most famous female anthropologists of the early twentieth century. The rise of feminist anthropology in the late twentieth century sparked a renewed interest in their lives, times, and friendship. This interest then spread to lesser-known female students of Boas, such as African-American folklorist and author Zora Neale Hurston (1891–1960). Mead, Benedict, and Hurston, along with other anthropologists, are now subjects of numerous biographies—there are more than ten biographies of Mead alone—that explore how individuals who feel culturally alienated may gravitate to anthropology, “find themselves” in the discipline, and even, if only unconsciously, fashion it according to their own psychological needs.

The Development of Psychological Anthropology

Key Words: basic personality structure, Freudian anthropology, maintenance systems, personality variables, primary cultural institutions, projective systems, psychodynamic, secondary cultural institutions

Psychological anthropologists such as Margaret Mead and Ruth Benedict knew about Freudian psychology but were unwilling to use it as the basis of their work. Nevertheless, Boasian-era anthropologists found elements of Freudian theory appealing. Psychological anthropology entered a new phase when anthropologists critiqued Freudian theory, rejected much of it, and then incorporated some of it into a revised theoretical perspective.

In many ways Freudian theory represented the very kind of anthropology that Franz Boas and his students were trying to overcome. Freud's ideas were highly speculative, overly generalized, evolutionary, hereditarian, sexist, and, in equating non-Western adults with Western children, racist and ethnocentric. Boas used Mead to try to disprove Freud's pronouncement that adolescent psychosexual turmoil was universal. British social anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski had a similar goal in mind when he demonstrated that the Oedipus complex was irrelevant for the matrilineal South Pacific Trobriand Islanders because, in their kinship system, "mother's brother," not "father," was the source of authority over sons. This kind of research showed that if any parts of Freudian theory were to be salvaged for anthropology, the whole theoretical edifice would have to be reconstructed with cross-cultural variables.

While finding Freudian theory objectionable and anachronistic, Boasian anthropologists at the same time found it stimulating and engaging. Like anthropology, Freudian psychology was iconoclastic, forcing people to analyze thoughts and behaviour they usually accepted as "normal." And it was a body of thought about personality, a subject in which anthropology could claim no special expertise. Psychological anthropologists were drawn to Freudian psychology in the 1930s, and, when this happened, they had to change it in major ways. They abandoned Freud's explanation of psychic evolution, downplayed his emphasis on sex, recast his formulations in terms of cultural relativism, and focused on the development of normal, as opposed to pathological, personality. The result was a new Freudian phase in psychological anthropology, characterized by the study of the development of personality cross-culturally, with a strong emphasis on the importance of early childhood experiences.

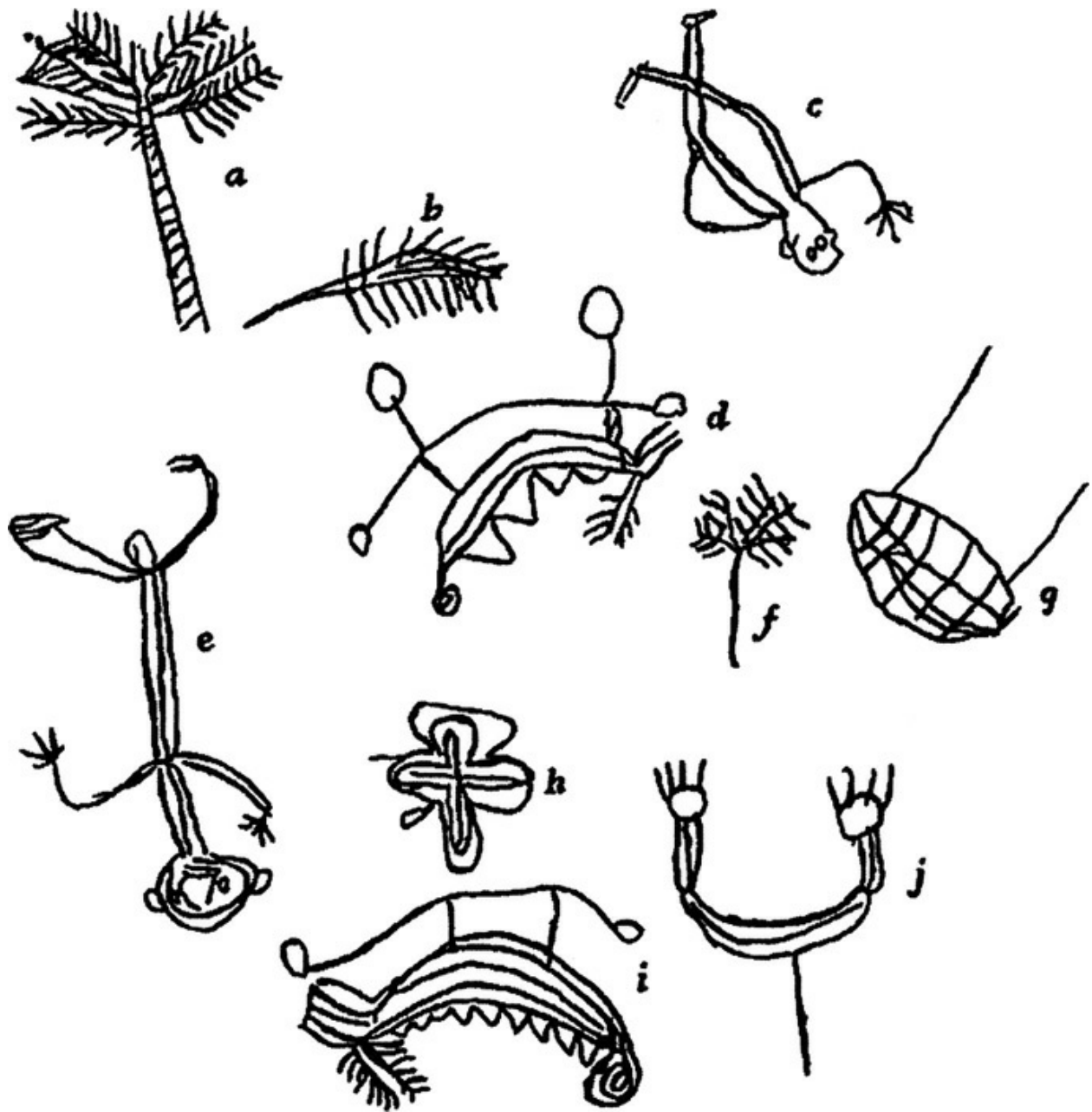


FIGURE 2.8 Alorese Youth Drawings: Cora Du Bois (1903–91) used these drawings by 14-year-old male Atamau Maugliki to interpret Alorese “basic personality”: a) coconut tree; b) fern; c) evil spirit; d) village guardian spirit carving; e) seer’s evil familiar spirit; f) fern; g) spirit altar; h) hawk (flower); i) village guardian spirit carving; j) spirit boat carving.

From *The People of Alor*, Volume II. Copyright © 1944 by the University of Minnesota Press. Reproduced by permission of the University of Minnesota Press.

The chief theoretical architect of **Freudian anthropology** was Abram Kardiner (1891–1981), a psychoanalyst who studied with Freud but who realized that Freud’s ideas were culture-bound—a partial product of Freud’s own childhood—and had to be overhauled. To accomplish this task, he convened a seminar of anthropologists in New York City in the late 1930s. Major participants included Boasians Ruth Benedict, Ruth Bunzel (1898–1990), Edward Sapir, and Cora Du Bois. Their objective was to develop a theoretical framework for investigating how different cultural experiences nurtured different personality types. With input from the seminar, Kardiner devised a research model with three major components: **primary cultural institutions**, **secondary cultural institutions**, and **basic personality structure**. Primary institutions were those that affected childrearing practices, for example, arrangements for the feeding, weaning, and daily care of infants. Secondary institutions were the major institutions of society, politics, and religion. In Kardiner’s model, basic personality structure was shaped by primary institutions and then “projected” onto secondary institutions, which functioned to help people cope with the world by depicting it in familiar, culturally adaptive terms. Kardiner called this approach **psychodynamic**.

The task of psychodynamic research was to assess primary institutions, secondary institutions, and basic personality structure independently, and then to correlate them in terms of Kardiner’s model. To assess basic personality structure, psychodynamic anthropologists used clinical tests such as the Thematic Apperception Test, or TAT, and the Rorschach, or “ink blot,” test to get informants to “project” their personalities on paper. The first systematic research of this kind was done by Cora Du Bois (1903–91) on the island of Alor in the Dutch East Indies. Du Bois collected Rorschach profiles, children’s drawings, and psychological life histories, which she then sent back for assessment to clinical specialists in New York. They concluded that the basic Alorese personality was shallow, indifferent, and apathetic. How did such a basic personality develop? According to Du Bois, it developed from the early childhood experience of maternal neglect, caused by Alorese mothers’ need to spend extended periods of time away from their children tending crops in fields. This neglect taught children to expect that their emotional needs would not be readily satisfied, with the further consequence that low expectations were projected onto Alorese religion, characterized by unresponsive deities and carelessly manufactured effigies. Shaped through

this kind of projection, Alorese religion was able to help children adapt to the maternal neglect they received. Du Bois's book *The People of Alor* (1944) was the theoretical high point of psychodynamic anthropology.

The theoretical low points were the national character studies of the World War II era, notably Geoffrey Gorer's studies of Japan and Russia, which marked the end of the serious blend of anthropology and Freudian theory. Beginning in the 1950s, innovations in social scientific research methods, in particular the increased use of statistics, prompted anthropologists to distance themselves from Freudian psychology, which, from the perspective of empirical science, appeared rife with ill-defined and uninvestigable concepts. A new generation of psychological anthropologists began to purge anthropology of these concepts and to use statistics to make cross-cultural generalizations precise. The pioneering effort in this new direction was John Whiting (1908–99) and Irvin Child's (1915–2000) *Child Training and Personality: A Cross-Cultural Study* (1953). Whiting and Child generated cross-cultural data from, among other sources, the new Human Relations Area Files at Yale University and manipulated these data statistically to reveal significant cross-cultural associations. One of these, described by Marvin Harris in *The Rise of Anthropological Theory*, involved the following traits: prolonged periods of nursing at a mother's breast; prolonged postpartum prohibitions of sexual intercourse; polygyny, or the practice of a man having more than one wife; infants sleeping exclusively with their mothers; patrilineality and patrilocality, or determination of genealogical descent and post-marital residence through the male line; and strict, often severe, male puberty rites.

In statistics, association does not necessarily *prove* cause, but it can *suggest* cause and help narrow the search for cause-and-effect relationships. Anthropologists have been able to link Whiting and Child's traits in a cause-and-effect chain of events beginning with the need for prolonged periods of nursing to supplement dietary protein and ending with the need for strong male puberty rites to sever the close attachment of son to mother in cultures with male domination. Whiting and Child modified Kardiner's psychodynamic model and renamed its major components: primary institutions became **maintenance systems**, especially as they affected child training practices; secondary institutions became **projective systems**; and basic personality structure became **personality variables**.

In the 25 years between *Coming of Age in Samoa* and *Child-Training and*

Personality, American psychological anthropology evolved through pre-Freudian, Freudian, and post-Freudian phases. A brand of anthropology that began as a humanistic, almost literary attempt to make Americans more tolerant of different kinds of cultures and personalities ended up, in the middle of the twentieth century, modelled after psychologically “detached” social science. Throughout all these transformations, the investigation of culture and personality remained a uniquely American contribution to anthropological theory.

French Structural Anthropology

While Franz Boas and his students were promulgating their brands of anthropology in North America, other theoretical influences were at work in France and Britain. In France, classical cultural evolutionism never really took hold. In its place, the seminal and pervasive influence of Émile Durkheim ensured that, when French anthropology assumed its twentieth-century identity, it did so in a way that was more continuous with, rather than a radical departure from, its nineteenth-century legacy. Durkheim, a rationalist as much as an empiricist, had understood thought to precede observation and the origins of social phenomena to be in the group mind. In his theoretical terms, the elementary forms of social phenomena were collective representations of the collective consciousness of people, which promoted social cohesion and solidarity. This outlook became the basis for French structural anthropology when Claude Lévi-Strauss converted the concept of elementary forms into that of elementary structures.

Marcel Mauss

Key Word: reciprocity

The intellectual transition from Durkheim to Lévi-Strauss and French structural anthropology was accomplished by Durkheim's student and nephew Marcel Mauss (1872–1950). A decorated veteran of World War I, Mauss enjoyed a productive career that included a professional collaboration with his uncle at the helm of *Année Sociologique*. This was succeeded by lectureships in ethnology and religious studies at two French universities—first, the Institute of Ethnology, and later, the Collège de France.

Contrasting the careers of many of his peers in the British and American schools, Mauss's influence in the field of anthropology did not derive from his ethnographic monographs or fieldwork but rather from a meticulous attention to theoretical issues that lay at the heart of many published essays and lecture notes published posthumously. Mauss was a lifelong Durkheimian, and his overriding concern was to understand the structured nature of social cohesion, which he took to be embodied in a series of general mental principles that constituted “total social facts.” His most well-known

elaboration of the idea of the total social fact was expressed in his essay *The Gift* (1924), in which the apparently spontaneous act of gift exchange was shown to be regulated according to integrated mental rules of **reciprocity** that were binding on all parties to the exchange. These elementary principles or structures were understood to be the logic, or “glue,” that unified different kinds of social institutions (kinship, religion, aesthetics, economics, etc.). Hence, the phenomenon of the gift was to be sociologically interpreted as an embodiment of a basic principle of social life, situated at the intersection of different “domains” of social life and containing within it many types of meaning. A common example is the exchange of gifts at Christmastime.

One of Mauss’s most important contributions was to shift the focus from Durkheim’s “mind” of the group to the minds of individuals. In Mauss’s scheme, elementary structures of individual minds precede elementary structures of the group mind, which in turn precede elementary structures of the outside world. Mauss was particularly interested in elementary structures of the practice of giving gifts. For him, gift-giving was exchange, or reciprocity, which operated according to the elementary reciprocity principle: “to give, to receive, and to repay.” Reciprocity was an inherent mental structure, a logic shared by everyone. Unlike economic anthropologists, who considered reciprocity to be restricted to non-market economic transactions, Mauss considered it to be a universal principle of exchange governing, besides economics, social organization and kinship—an idea elaborated by Lévi-Strauss through much of his writing.

Claude Lévi-Strauss

Key Words: binary oppositions, generalized exchange, matrilineal cross-cousin marriage, patrilineal cross-cousin marriage, phonemes, Prague School, restricted exchange, structuralism

Claude Lévi-Strauss (1908–2009) was the guru of French structural anthropology and one of the most celebrated, even if not always understood, anthropologists of the twentieth century. Lévi-Strauss studied at the University of Paris before leaving France in the 1930s to become a professor at the University of São Paulo in Brazil. While there, he conducted himself as a kind of expatriate, doing fieldwork published later as the ethnographic travelogue *Tristes Tropiques* (1955). In the 1940s, he spent several years as a

professor at the New School for Social Research in New York, where he interacted with Franz Boas. In 1950, Lévi-Strauss became director of studies at the École Pratique des Hautes Études, followed in 1959 by an appointment as chair of social anthropology at the Collège de France.

During his years as a student, Lévi-Strauss flirted with politics while immersing himself in the traditions of French ethnography and the ideas of Marcel Mauss. Following his Brazilian fieldwork, he turned his attention to anthropological theory, publishing *The Elementary Structures of Kinship* (1949) and *Structural Anthropology* (1958). These books present a complex analysis of kinship based on one aspect of reciprocity: the reciprocal exchange of women.

Working in the tradition of Durkheim, whose concern was solidarity, Lévi-Strauss began with the proposition that reciprocal exchange among social groups promotes alliances, which facilitate social interaction and make society cohere. These alliances are achieved through the reciprocal exchange of women as “gifts.” The propensity, or structure, for gift-giving is innate in the human mind, which operates with a universal logic of dualities, called **binary oppositions**, something he learned from the **Prague School** of structural linguists, led by linguist Roman Jakobson (1896–1982), who helped formulate the concept of **phonemes**. In structural linguistics, phonemes are minimally contrasting pairs of sounds that create linguistic meaning. In structural anthropology, binary oppositions are contrasting pairs of mental constructs that create social meaning. Some of the binary oppositions Lévi-Strauss discussed at great length are life versus death, culture versus nature, and self versus other. With binary oppositions, the *relationship* between elements is as important as the elements themselves. This relationship is “mediated.” For example, the binary opposition between kinship groups, a transformation of the binary opposition of self versus other, is mediated by the exchange of women. In **structuralism**, binary oppositions are part of an integrated system of logically connected categories of meaning that structure social activity and the way in which that activity is conceptualized.

Because Lévi-Strauss analyzed social organization in the way that structural linguists analyze language, form was as important as content. In the case of the elementary structures of kinship, Lévi-Strauss observed that kinship groups who exchange women create a form, or relationship, among themselves, as well as relationships among exchanged women. This

relationship helps to mediate the groups; that is, it brings them closer together. Implicated in exchanges of women are four basic relationships: brother and sister; husband and wife; father and son; and mother's brother, or "uncle," and sister's son, or "nephew." Each of these relationships is either "positive," promoting harmony and happiness, or "negative," promoting hostility and antagonism. According to Lévi-Strauss, the mind balances positives and negatives, so in a given exchange system, two of the relationships must be positive and two must be negative. From culture to culture, the content of the relationships can change, but their form, logic, or structure remains the same.

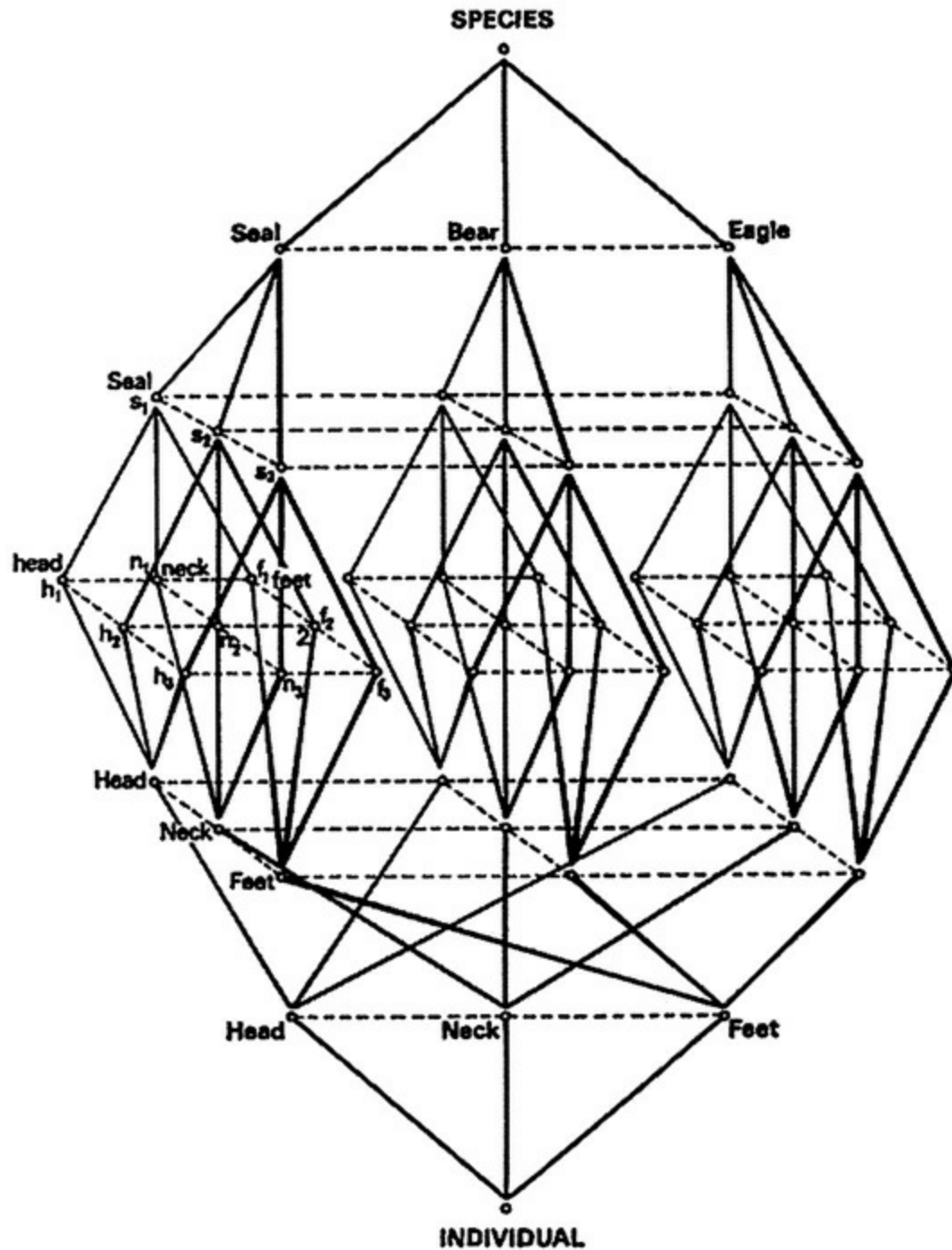


FIGURE 2.9 The Totemic Operator: This is a model of totemic “structure” in the theoretical schema of Claude Lévi-Strauss (1908–2009). Lévi-Strauss claimed that the philosophy of structuralism came to him while he was contemplating a dandelion puff.

From *The Savage Mind*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962. Copyright © 1962 by Librarie Plon. Copyright © 1966 George Weidenfield and Nicholson Ltd. Reprinted by permission of the University of Chicago Press.

In Lévi-Strauss's scheme, the reciprocal exchange of women can assume either of two forms. **Restricted exchange** creates a relationship between two kinship groups through "symmetrical" cross-cousin marriage, whereby brothers and sisters in one group marry cross-cousins—cousins related through parents of the opposite sex—in the other group. **Generalized exchange** creates a relationship between more than two kinship groups through "asymmetrical" cross-cousin marriage, whereby brothers and sisters are not exchanged between two groups directly but return to their groups after having been circulated through other groups. According to Lévi-Strauss, generalized exchange promotes more solidarity than restricted exchange because it creates alliances involving more kinship groups. Beyond this, he identified two forms of generalized exchange, one of which he thought promotes more social solidarity than the other. **Matrilateral cross-cousin marriage**, or marriage to mother's brother's children, leads to a "long cycle" of generalized exchange, while **patrilateral cross-cousin marriage**, or marriage to father's sister's children, leads to only a "short cycle." The long cycle promotes more solidarity than the short cycle because it creates alliances involving more kinship groups. This difference, Lévi-Strauss thought, explains why matrilateral cross-cousin marriage is more prevalent than patrilateral cross-cousin marriage in the ethnographic record.

Besides kinship, where Lévi-Strauss made substantial theoretical contributions to anthropology, structural anthropologists have analyzed a wide range of cultural domains, including, notably, food preferences and myths. In an analysis of the North American Native myth of the "tricky coyote" (re-analyzed by Marvin Harris in *Cultural Materialism* [1979]), Lévi-Strauss set up two pairs of analogous binary oppositions—agriculture is to warfare as life is to death—and claimed that hunting mediates agriculture and warfare because hunting preserves human life while leading to the death of animals. Scavenging animals like the coyote mediate yet another pair of binary oppositions—herbivore to carnivore, also analogous to life and death—so coyotes must be tricky. In *The Raw and the Cooked* (1969), a book devoted to the structure of cuisine, Lévi-Strauss contrasted raw, cooked, and rotted foods. For cooked foods, boiling is to roasting as culture is to nature. Boiled foods are served to kinspeople while roasted foods are served to strangers, because kinspeople are associated with culture while foreigners are associated with nature. Later, Lévi-Strauss extended his analysis of the

structure of cuisine to human cannibalism.

Many have noted that, perhaps more than any other anthropologist of the twentieth century, and regardless of which side of the Atlantic Ocean one hails from, Claude Lévi-Strauss was responsible for the single most original body of theory and writing to emerge in the discipline. Indeed, it often seemed as though much of the theoretical agenda of late-twentieth-century anthropology was set by Lévi-Strauss—both by those who explicitly and implicitly championed his ideas and by others, notably Marvin Harris, who argued against them. It was certainly not long before the structuralist thesis that Lévi-Strauss proposed caught the interest of anglophone anthropologists, who began to expand upon his work in earnest during the 1960s.

Edmund Leach and Mary Douglas

Key Words: oscillating equilibrium, pollution, purity

While structural theory flourished in the francophone world, it required translation for most Anglo-American anthropologists, in both the literal and the figurative senses, because the British and Americans were not accustomed to Durkheimian analysis that was mentalistic and synchronic. Those anthropologists responsible for communicating and championing the work of their French colleagues in the anglophone world were accordingly looked to as “filters” and interpreters of structuralist analysis. Two of the most articulate exponents of Lévi-Strauss’s structuralism during the 1950s and 1960s were Edmund Leach and Mary Douglas.

Edmund Leach (1910–88) figures among the most important of British social anthropologists, in particular for his highly original analysis of social structure and conflict in Burma in which he challenged many tenets of the perspective of his mentors, Bronislaw Malinowski and Raymond Firth. He did this by developing a distinctive approach to structural-functionalism, modelled on the theory of Lévi-Strauss, with which he became acquainted in the early 1950s. In *Political Systems of Highland Burma* (1954), written while Leach was a professor at the London School of Economics, he emphasized the shifting nature of cultural meaning and political power among the diverse Kachin of the Burmese (Myanmar) highlands, among whom he had lived while serving as a British officer during World War II.

In this book, Leach argued that the language of myth served as a window

onto the Burmese social order, and that anthropological interpretation of that language would reveal the underlying structures of the Kachin social order. Wary of the structural-functional tendency to impose rigid grids of behaviour on what he viewed as the fluid and highly changeable character of social life, he proposed that instead of viewing as immutable their own theoretical constructs, anthropologists might consider their method of analysis—structural-functionalism—as a “necessary evil”: an explanatory framework that enabled social scientists to artificially “capture” the workings of a society that was, in reality, always in a state of flux, or, to employ Leach’s term, **oscillating equilibrium**. Among the Kachin, he argued, there existed a single social system that was nevertheless internally differentiated along an axis running between two social “poles”: the hierarchically ranked *gumsa* Kachin at one extreme and the egalitarian *gumlao* Kachin at the other.

In his later years at Cambridge University, Leach became an ardent and eloquent exponent of French structuralism, largely from the proverbial “armchair,” with his own coterie of students interested in structural analysis. Among his areas of study in the 1970s was mythology in the Judeo-Christian tradition, within which, he posited, religious mythmaking generally involved attempts by exegetes, or interpreters, to bridge a structural opposition between life and death with the concept of “another world.” One of the most compelling examples of Leach’s structural analysis of Judeo-Christian mythology was his comparison and contrast of John the Baptist and Jesus Christ.

While having generally less stature in British anthropology than Leach, Mary Douglas (1921–2007) is likewise recognized as one of the most important interpreters of French structuralism for an anglophone readership. A student under Meyer Fortes and Max Gluckman, Douglas, an Africanist, was also deeply influenced by the work of E.E. Evans-Pritchard and, subsequently, Lévi-Strauss.

A professor at the University of London and Oxford University before taking a position at Northwestern University, Douglas was influential for her groundbreaking study of the mental rules of classification governing the universal concepts of **purity** and **pollution**. In particular, her cross-cultural study of ritual prohibitions against things that are “dirty”—regardless of how this concept is locally constructed—has been of lasting value to anthropologists seeking to understand how social boundaries are created, sustained, or transgressed. In her best-known work, *Purity and Danger: An*

Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo (1966), she argued that Durkheimian principles of social order were expressed in culturally generated formulations of the pure and the impure: purity is structurally connected to ideas concerning social harmony, coherence, logic, and boundaries, while impurity is associated with “dirty things” that are morally “dangerous” insofar as they suggest ambiguity and uncertainty about social rules and meaning. Famous examples from the work include analyses of Old Testament temple rituals and food prohibitions in a chapter entitled “The Abominations of Leviticus.”

Latter-Day Structuralists

French structuralism continued to exert considerable influence across the social sciences, even though its impact has in recent years been largely indirect. At the very least, the notion of “structure,” whether cognitive (as Lévi-Strauss emphasized) or social (as early generations of British social anthropologists proposed), has been a resilient “straw man” in contrast to which more recent generations of anthropologists have developed more “process”-centred theories and epistemologies. Still, it seems clear that the Durkheimian tradition in anthropology, which stresses the integrated aspects of social and cultural life, is still a fundamental orientation for those seeking to break new theoretical ground. Accordingly, others have refused to throw the proverbial baby out with the bathwater and have instead attempted to infuse French structuralism with a concern for social class and power dynamics.

STRUCTURAL MARXISTS

Key Words: formalists, structural Marxists, substantivists

One of the most theoretically abstract offshoots of French structuralism was so-called structural Marxism. This body of theory grew out of an anthropological debate that began during the 1960s between economic **formalists** and economic **substantivists**. Formalists such as Scott Cook (b. 1937) maintained that the traditional Western definition of economics, the allocation of scarce resources among unlimited wants, also applies to non-Western economies. Substantivists such as George Dalton (1926–91), Karl Polanyi (1886–1964), and Marshall Sahlins disagreed, maintaining that

formalists were ethnocentric and that capitalist conceptions do not apply to economies lacking markets and the political apparatus of states. According to substantivists, people in cultures governed by kinship do not *think* like economic materialists and strategize to maximize their material advantages because the primary significance of their economic transactions is social. Some substantivists even argued that economic exploitation does not exist if people do not think of themselves as exploited. **Structural Marxists** aimed to resolve the tensions arising from these debates. In some ways, their idea was to apply Hegelian dialectics to social theory itself—the formalist “thesis” and substantivist “antithesis” being resolved in a new synthesis that linked materialism and idealism.

This marriage of materialism and idealism would not, it seems, have been unappealing to Lévi-Strauss himself. In his autobiographical *Tristes Tropiques*, he describes Marxism as one of “three mistresses” guiding the development of structuralism from its inchoate beginnings to coherent maturity. This being said, it is difficult to divine Marxist leanings in Lévi-Strauss’s sprawling corpus of ethnography. Although hints of a Marxist position emerge in *The Savage Mind* (1962), in which he claims as one of his goals the development of a theory of superstructures “scarcely touched upon by Marx,” this line of reasoning has been generally underdeveloped in his writing. There is, however, some idea of what he had in mind. In his analysis of Native American mythology, Lévi-Strauss argues that contradictions in the place of women as both commodities and social beings are reflected in myths that specify conflict between different species of animals.

As pioneered by Maurice Godelier (b. 1934) and Jonathan Friedman (b. 1946) in the 1970s, the central ambition of structural Marxism was to relate the theory of dialectical materialism to a theory of dialectical idealism by demonstrating that the structure of economic transactions derives from the structure of thought. As discussed by Marvin Harris in *Cultural Materialism* (1979), under the influence of Lévi-Strauss, structural Marxism was little short of an effort to “dematerialize” Marxism—that is, the theory of dialectical materialism—and refocus it on the structure of dialectical thought. Thought, as opposed to behaviour, is implicated by the Marxist concepts of “class consciousness” and “social relations” of the means of economic production. Pursuing these ideas, structural Marxists like Friedman began searching for hidden “dialectical” structures that make economies tick. Friedman found that the structure of capitalist economies is a fetish for

money, while the structures of non-capitalist economies are rooted in social and religious values. The apogee of structural Marxism within anthropology came in the late 1970s, as another Marx-inspired perspective, political economy, and post-structural analyses inspired by such theorists as Michel Foucault, Jacques Lacan, and Antonio Gramsci began to grow in influence.

MARSHALL SAHLINS

Key Word: structure of the conjuncture

Perhaps the most famous exponent of structuralism within anthropology after Lévi-Strauss is Marshall Sahlins (b. 1930), who converted from cultural evolutionism in the 1960s and published his most evocative and controversial theses on structuralism in the 1980s—well into a period of introspective malaise and uncertainty in the discipline. Best known among these is Sahlins's application of structuralist concern for symbolic patterning to his interest in colonial encounters in the Pacific. In *Islands of History* (1985), Sahlins offers an ingenious resolution to the tension between cultural structure and historical change by way of analyzing the colonial encounter between European eighteenth-century explorer-colonists and Native Melanesians. In particular, he explores English–Hawaiian relations that culminated in the fabled death of British Royal Navy officer and explorer Captain James Cook at the hands of Native Hawaiians in 1779. The problem lies in how to explain the reception of Europeans by Native Hawaiians possessed of their own cultural structure of symbols and meanings. From Sahlins's perspective, this dark episode proves an ideal case study in which to explore the relations between culture and history. He argues that the cultural structure of any community is not static but rather open to transformation depending on context. When circumstances warranted, pre-contact Hawaiian culture adapted to the new situation—framing their encounter with Europeans within an indigenous logic of social relations. In this way, the presence of Englishman Cook and his crew not only provoked but also required explanation. Sahlins argues that contact, or “conjuncture,” between two distinct cultural structures—that of the Hawaiian and that of the European—precipitated change to both, in effect creating a hybrid structure at the point of encounter. It is this **structure of the conjuncture** that must be explored in order to understand both why Cook was killed and, more relevant for

anthropology, how apparently static cultural structures change through time.

In essence, Sahlins's argument is that Native Hawaiians in the late eighteenth century understood Cook to be a fertility god because he acted in accordance with Hawaiian mythical expectations of divinity. He "became" Lono, whose annual return and ritual sacrifice were crucial to the smooth functioning of Hawaiian society—a people dependent on Lono's divine power (*mana*) to ensure health, fecundity (of women, animals, and the Earth), and prosperity from one agricultural cycle to the next. When Cook, after a period of tension and miscommunication with Hawaiians, was killed by a sharp blow to the head (provoked by the attempted kidnapping of a Hawaiian king), his crew saw the event as nothing short of murder. Sahlins makes the case that, to the contrary, for the Hawaiians, the killing of Cook was a symbolically powerful act within the indigenous cultural structure. Given their belief in Cook's divinity, it was entirely predictable, as was the idea that he would appear post-mortem during the following year's rites of fertility renewal. In this structure of the conjuncture, Cook is recreated in the image of Hawaiian mythology, in terms of both his quality as a being and his relationship to Hawaii and Hawaiians.



FIGURE 2.10 Structure of the Conjunction: The killing of Captain James Cook by Native Hawaiians in 1779, depicted here, was the subject of a protracted theoretical debate between anthropologists Marshall Sahlins and Gananath Obeyesekere.

CLEVELY, John the Younger. "Death of Captain James Cook at Kealahou Bay, Hawaii, in 1779." Reproduced by permission of the Art Archive at Art Resource, NY.

This perspective has been taken to task by anthropologist Gananath Obeyesekere (b. 1930), in what may be described as one of the more lively, engaging, and protracted debates (spanning at least three books) in recent social and cultural anthropology. In brief, Obeyesekere argues for a reading of Cook's encounter with the Hawaiians that places awareness of the predatory intentions of European colonials at the forefront of Hawaiian consciousness. Far from lack of awareness of Cook's colonial ambitions, it was precisely the conflict created by these that resulted in the captain's killing. The idea that Cook was made a god is, in this wise, itself a myth of European auto-aggrandizement. To this, Sahlins has responded by hoisting

Obeyesekere with his own petard: if the perception of eighteenth-century Hawaiians was more complex than permitted by deterministic cultural structures, then so too was European self-imagining. And so the debate goes—more enlightening, perhaps, of recent debates in anthropology than of structuralism per se.

The Legacy of French Structural Anthropology

Key Words: obscurantism, solipsism

Lévi-Strauss's perspective on linguistic and cognitive structure, which (via linguist Roman Jakobson) draws heavily on Saussure's theory of signs, has been the central target of criticism on several fronts. Some, such as materialist Marvin Harris, have derided structuralism for assuming, as Lévi-Strauss appears to in places, that cultural structures *are* the empirical "reality" of any given society—an assumption that would seem to set aside the possibility of scientific understanding, not to mention common sense. If this is the case, then relativism is privileged as more than just a research principle: it becomes a precondition of anthropological understanding and comparison. Even Sahlins, eloquent expounder of structuralism though he is, has not been able to resolve this inconsistency, which has significant implications for his work on the colonial encounter in Hawaii. Among Hawaiians, the historical moment of encounter with the English is informed by and fused with cosmology. If this can be the case, he argues, the notion of historical objectivity, too, must be investigated for its mythical properties. Taken seriously, this reduction of anthropological analysis to poetics would seem to rob the field of its power to explain cultural process.

Others, ranging from post-structural guru Michel Foucault to the preponderance of social and cultural theorists today, are less polemical. Their view is that Lévi-Strauss's focus on cognition *tends* to ignore the practical, emotive, and diachronic aspects of culture. In denying, at least tacitly, the somatic, social, and historical, structuralism is exposed to the criticism that it leaves the door open for **obscurantism, solipsism**, and extreme relativism—all of which stand in stark contrast to structuralism's universalist pretensions. Still, the idea that patterned sequences of symbolic meaning stand in observable, "decipherable" relation to other such sequences is of enduring appeal, and many anthropologists have made efforts to adapt this aspect of

French structuralism to more contextually—and historically—sensitive ethnography.

One might consequently ask how valid these critiques are and to what extent they have been accepted by anthropological theorists. As Joel Robbins has noted in an essay, such critiques amount to “willfully simple-minded interpretations of the hot/cold distinction” that ignore Lévi-Strauss’s more subtle arguments concerning social and historical change. In Robbins’s view, Lévi-Strauss’s supposedly ahistorical perspective must be considered a meditation on “the danger of universalizing a Western cultural model of the nature and value of change as a theoretical construct.” For this reason his legacy, and that of French structuralism, must be seen as contributing to a growing disciplinary awareness of the need for caution in exporting Western models of society and culture: a contribution that would be of great significance in later decades.

British Social Anthropology

Key Words: functionalism, organic (or organismic) analogy, social function, social morphology, social physiology, social structure, structural-functionalism, structuralism

In Britain, the leading early-twentieth-century anthropologists were Alfred Reginald Radcliffe-Brown and Bronislaw Malinowski. By force of personality and intellect, these two figures infused British anthropology with a theoretical agenda far different from the one that had consumed the efforts of their nineteenth-century forebears. Working separately and, in the case of Radcliffe-Brown, under the influence of Émile Durkheim, they founded the school known as British social anthropology. The pivotal “-isms” of British social anthropology were **structuralism**, **functionalism**, and, sometimes, **structural-functionalism**. These “-isms,” especially as incorporated in the work of Radcliffe-Brown and his students, were based on Durkheim’s **organic, or organismic, analogy**, the conceptualization that society is like an organism.

Analogies between social and biological phenomena were rooted in the Scientific Revolution, which inspired social scientists to model their enterprise on natural science, and flourished after Darwinism, which drew attention to both biological and social evolution. Biological organisms have both structures and functions. The scientific study of organic structure is morphology, while the scientific study of organic function is physiology. According to the organic analogy, the scientific study of societies should include **social morphology** and **social physiology**. A further inference is that the scientific study of society should include social evolution, but British social anthropologists associated evolutionism with nineteenth-century anthropology and did not wish to elaborate this part of the organic analogy. Their orientation was synchronic, meaning ahistorical, rather than diachronic, or concerned with change through time.

The British understanding of “society” was significantly different from the American understanding of “culture.” American anthropologists understood culture to comprise economic, social, political, and religious thoughts and behaviour, with both synchronic and diachronic dimensions. In contrast, British anthropologists focused more narrowly on the synchronic

study of society. **Social structure** was the matrix, or enclosing form, of society, while **social function** was the role that individual parts of society played in maintaining the structural whole. The result of proper social functioning was a social structure maintained in equilibrium, or, in terms of the organic analogy, structural “health.” Derived from Durkheimian thought, the twinned theories of structuralism and functionalism inclined British anthropologists to see society as harmonious and stable, unlike evolutionists, who saw culture as prone to change, or Marxists, who saw it as conflicted. British social anthropologists also differed from American historical particularists in their synchronic orientation and their relative lack of involvement with material culture, which American anthropologists maintained through closer affiliations with archaeologists.

A.R. Radcliffe-Brown

Key Words: genealogical method, lineages

The prototypical British social anthropologist, Alfred Reginald Radcliffe-Brown (1881–1955) embodied, more than any other figure of his generation, the emerging aspirations of an increasingly professionalized group of scholars seeking ways to move beyond the evolutionist principles bequeathed to them by the armchair-bound speculation of Tylor, Morgan, and others.

Trained in natural science and introduced to anthropology at Cambridge University, Radcliffe-Brown was initially influenced by members of the 1898–99 Cambridge Anthropological Expedition to the Torres Straits, a body of water separating Australia and New Guinea. This expedition was a groundbreaking deployment of a multidisciplinary team of researchers to gather information about Native peoples in the Straits area. Members of the team included anthropologist Alfred Cort Haddon (1855–1940), physician Charles Seligman (1873–1940), psychologist William H.R. Rivers (1864–1922), psychology student William McDougall (1871–1938), and several linguists and photographers. The expedition set new standards for excellence in fieldwork, yielded numerous publications, and helped launch or solidify the careers of key members. Rivers, for instance, went on to found the **genealogical method** of anthropology, a method based on the insights that the nub of non-Western social organization is kinship and that kinship can best be understood through the study of cultural history and psychology.

Early in his career, and under the tutelage of Rivers, Radcliffe-Brown conducted genealogical research in the Andaman Islands in the Bay of Bengal and made a name for himself with his now classic monograph *The Andaman Islanders* (1922). Subsequently, he held teaching appointments in England, Australia, South Africa, and the United States, where in the early 1930s he taught and was chair of the Anthropology Department at the University of Chicago. There, he interacted with Boasian anthropologists such as Robert Lowie and Fred Eggan (1906–91) and by most accounts, perhaps aided by his sometimes flamboyant personality, exercised a great deal of personal and professional influence, widening the appeal of what he conceived of as a natural science of primitive society beyond the confines of British anthropology. Besides *The Andaman Islanders*, his major publications include *The Social Organization of Australian Tribes* (1930–31); *A Natural Science of Society* (1948); *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage* (1950), edited with C. Daryll Forde (1902–73); and *Structure and Function in Primitive Society* (1952).

In spite of his early exposure to Rivers's ethnology, in his own work Radcliffe-Brown balked at the non-comparative work of his mentor and sought a more “scientific” basis for anthropology. Accordingly, among British anthropologists he is frequently credited with employing Durkheim's ideas about mechanical and organic solidarity as the theoretical basis of his original ethnographic fieldwork in Australia and Africa. Ultimately, his original insights transformed Durkheimian theory into a more empirically grounded variant in which mechanical and, especially, organic solidarity served as a framework within which a comparative, synchronic sociology of non-Western social systems might be carried out. The primary question that Radcliffe-Brown attempted to answer in his research was how ritual activity and different social institutions, especially kinship, contributed to the maintenance of social structure in and across “primitive” societies. Among his best-known contributions to structural-functionalist theory were delineations of the structural principles that informed the solidarity of sibling groups and **lineages**, and the various social practices associated with them, whose primitiveness made them invisible to the Western eye.

Generally speaking, Radcliffe-Brown is better represented in the work and thought of the many students he influenced within the British tradition and beyond than he is by his own corpus of research and writing, which was not vast. With the exception of Malinowski, who developed his own

distinctive perspective on functionalism, most anthropologists working in the British tradition in the first half of the twentieth century followed in the footsteps of Radcliffe-Brown, who introduced many in the profession to the work of Durkheim.

Bronislaw Malinowski

Key Words: *kula* ring, participant-observation

Second only to Radcliffe-Brown, the most influential British social anthropologist of the first half of the twentieth century was Bronislaw Malinowski (1884–1942). Malinowski was born and raised in Poland and studied anthropology at the London School of Economics, where he entered the British scene. In 1914, he set out to do fieldwork in New Guinea and had stopped at the Trobriand Islands when World War I broke out. The British government allowed him to stay in the Trobriands, where he spent several years doing ethnographic research that led to his ethnography *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (1922), widely regarded as the best of the early classics. Eventually, Malinowski returned to the London School of Economics, where during the 1920s and 1930s he helped train the second generation of British social anthropologists. In the twilight of his career, he also taught briefly at Yale University, although his influence there in no way rivalled that of Radcliffe-Brown among American anthropologists in Chicago. The titles of some of Malinowski's books were titillating and "juicy": for example, *Sex and Repression in Savage Society* (1927) and *The Sexual Life of Savages* (1929). He also wrote *Freedom and Civilization* (1944), *A Scientific Theory of Culture* (1944), and *A Diary in the Strict Sense of the Term* (1967). The diary was published 25 years after Malinowski's death and is noteworthy for its intensely personal, often brooding and melancholy account of his years as a Trobriand fieldworker.

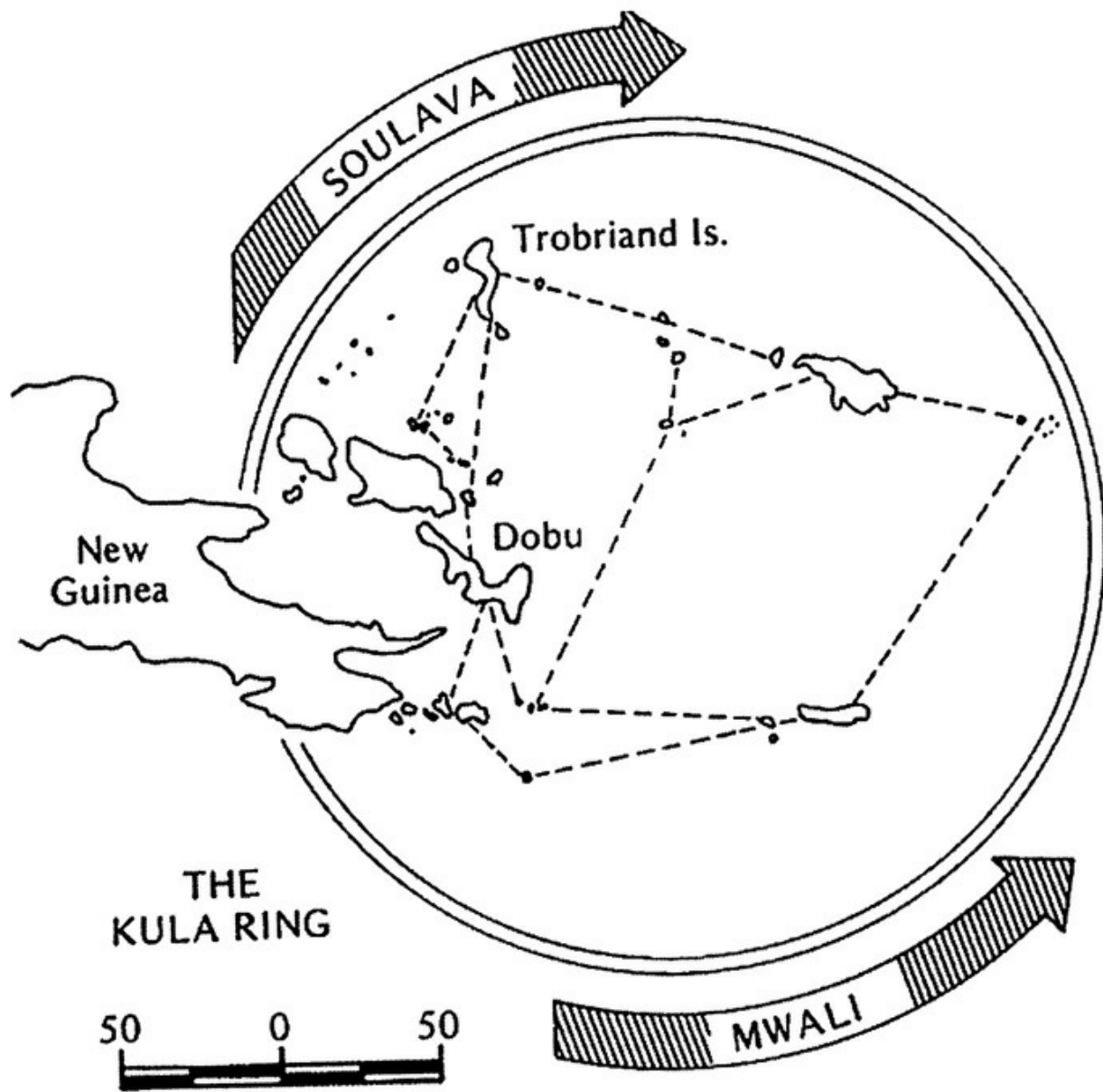


FIGURE 2.11 The *Kula* Ring: As analyzed by Bronislaw Malinowski (1884–1942), in the “ring,” necklaces (*soulava*) are exchanged clockwise, armshells (*mwali*) counterclockwise.

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Anthropologists acknowledge Malinowski to be the first and foremost early practitioner of the ethnographic method of **participant-observation**, by

which fieldworkers attempt to achieve ethnographic understanding through an artful synthesis of “insider,” “subjective” participation and “outsider,” “objective” observation. Participant-observation is heavily theorized in anthropology today. In *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*, Malinowski also rendered a classic analysis of the Trobriand **kula ring** of economic exchange and explored Freudian psychology in the context of a non-Western matrilineal culture. In addition to these contributions, Malinowski lays claim to anthropological fame for his theory of functionalism.

Malinowski’s formulation of functionalism differed from Radcliffe-Brown’s by being rooted in biology *actually* rather than analogously. Like Freud, Malinowski acknowledged that people have basic biological needs, including a basic need for sex. Culture functions to satisfy these basic needs with basic responses. In so doing, it creates a second level of cultural needs, or instrumental needs, which are satisfied with instrumental cultural responses. Instrumental responses create integrative cultural needs, which, in turn, are satisfied by integrative cultural responses. For example, the basic need for sex leads to an instrumental need for the social organization of sexual relations, which in turn leads to an integrative need for an ideology or belief system to reinforce that organization. This whole theoretical hierarchy of needs and responses that themselves become needs was inspired by Malinowski’s fieldwork in the Trobriands, where, according to his own diary, he suffered because his basic biological needs were not being satisfied in a “foreign” culture.



FIGURE 2.12 Participant-Observation: Bronislaw Malinowski joins in with Trobriand Islanders during ethnographic fieldwork in 1918.

Image MALINOWSKI/3/18/2, reproduced by permission of the Library of the London School of Economics & Political Science.

In recent years, historians of anthropology have set their sights beyond the mainstream national anthropological traditions of Britain, France, and the United States. Increasingly, they have recognized not only the international character of anthropology but also the diversity of cultural contexts that nurture anthropologists and their theories. A prime example is Malinowski, whose Polish roots, previously glossed over, are now being investigated. These roots will probably be more conspicuous in future histories of British social anthropology.

E.E. Evans-Pritchard

Key Word: colonial encounter

A second generation of British social anthropologists followed in Radcliffe-

Brown's and Malinowski's footsteps and broadened their anthropological path. Perhaps most notable among this cadre was Edward Evan Evans-Pritchard (1902–73).

Unlike his predecessors, Evans-Pritchard developed a distinctively historicist perspective that was at the time unique within British social anthropology and created a certain affinity between his work and that of his American peers. It is, accordingly, the paradox and genius of Evans-Pritchard's legacy that, although his theory perhaps represents the apogee of structural-functionalism in the tradition of Radcliffe-Brown, it also addresses those issues of overriding concern to later generations of anthropologists. Increasingly throughout his career, Evans-Pritchard opposed the positioning of anthropology as an experimental or natural science. Instead, he preferred to regard it as one of the humanities and saw the proper role of the ethnographer as an interpreter of history and cultural meaning. For this reason, many have felt that he might justifiably be cited as the father of interpretive or symbolic anthropology. More than any other figure of his generation, working within the structural-functionalism established by Radcliffe-Brown, Evans-Pritchard moved Radcliffe-Brown's science-oriented British social anthropology in a more "cultural" direction by proposing that the best approach to investigating social structure was to frame it as a series of flexible, logical, cognitive "maps" giving form and meaning to social behaviour.

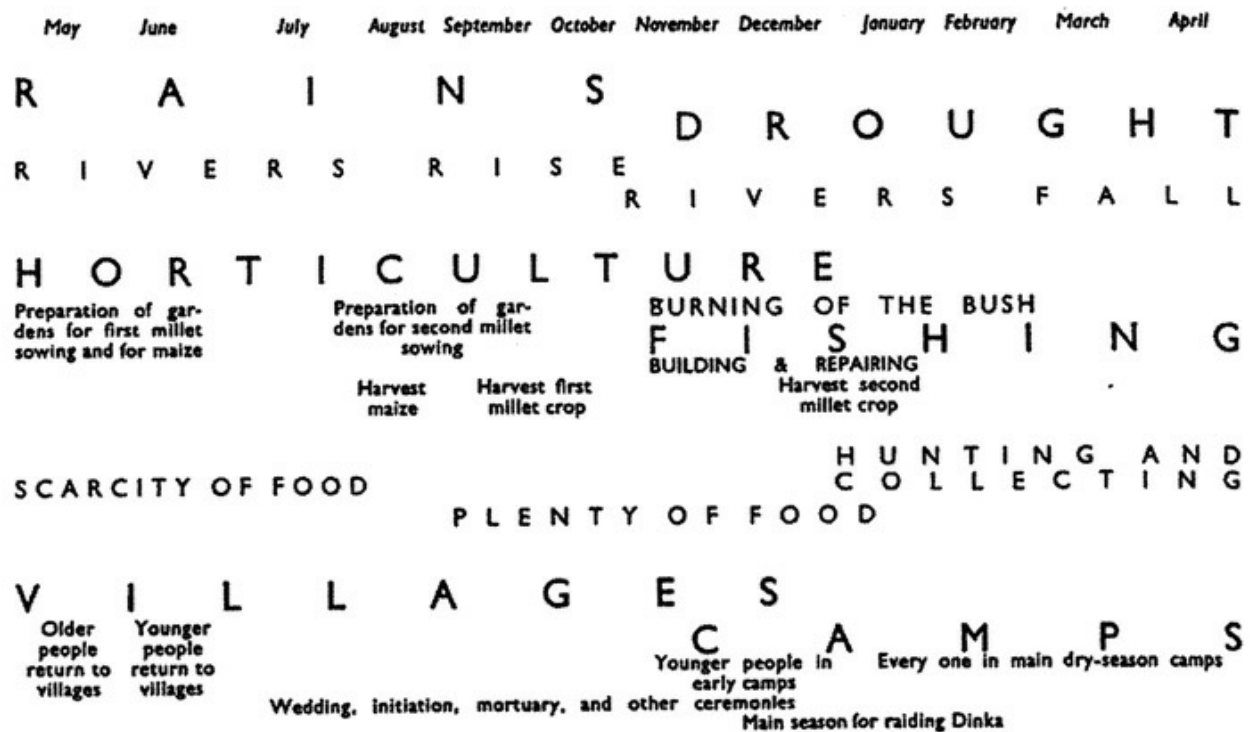


FIGURE 2.13 Nuer Seasonality: This is how British social anthropologist E.E. Evans-Pritchard summarized the seasonality of the Nuer of eastern Africa in 1940.

From *The Nuer: A Description of the Modes of Livelihood's Political Institutions of a Nilotic People*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1960, p. 97. Reproduced by permission of Oxford University Press, USA.

Between the 1920s and 1940s, Evans-Pritchard established a reputation as an East Africanist, composing a number of elegant ethnographic studies based on his fieldwork among the Azande and Nuer societies of the southern Sudan; best known among them are *Witchcraft, Oracles, and Magic among the Azande* (1937), *The Nuer* (1940), *African Political Systems* (1940, with Meyer Fortes), *Kinship and Marriage among the Nuer* (1951), and *Nuer Religion* (1956). Particularly in his work among the Nuer, he revisited Radcliffe-Brown's notion of social structure and rejected the idea that societies are best understood through the machine-like organic analogy. In a manner that prefigured the work of Lévi-Strauss and Clifford Geertz, Evans-Pritchard chose instead to seek interpretations of cultural structures that provided meaning for members of a society by weaving together various aspects of life experience. For example, the Nuer possess a unified cultural

structure, or system of abstract logic, that informs *both* the ideas that individuals have about ecology, space, time, and kinship, *and* the social relations and practices that are generated by these ideas.

In addition to his reputation as a prolific fieldworker, Evans-Pritchard is also legendary for having been an early champion of the cause of cultural relativism. Unlike his American peer Boas, for whom a relativistic perspective derived from his conviction that different societies have fundamentally incommensurable historical experiences, Evans-Pritchard was primarily concerned to prove the coherence and logic of what many anthropologists and philosophers (notably the French scholar Lucien Lévy-Bruhl [1857–1939]) took to be “primitive” thought, in order to show that the capacity for order and rationality was not limited to the Western world but was, rather, a *sine qua non* of all human social life. Famously, he set out to affirm the logic of the primitive world view in his ethnographic masterpiece *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande*. Evans-Pritchard rejected arguments set out by some of his contemporaries that witchcraft and sorcery were evidence of pre-rational logic. These arguments, not coincidentally, had the effect of confirming for many the notion of a natural hierarchy of cultures and races, the apex of which was nearly exclusively the province of white Europeans. Evans-Pritchard convincingly argued the opposite. Based on long-term ethnographic fieldwork among the Azande, he reasoned that such beliefs, and the complex of practices, expectations, and fears associated with them, were indeed quite rational if one adopted the assumptions of Azande society about the interpenetration of seen and unseen worlds and the capacity of some individuals to do others harm. This harm could be done either consciously, through the technical manipulation of powerful objects, or unconsciously, by way of a special organ of the body that caused misfortune in others.

Despite his commitment to a historical and relativistic perspective, it is ironic that Evans-Pritchard’s work is frequently cited as an excellent example of research conducted under the shadow of European colonialism in Africa. While recognizing his contributions, latter-day political-economic and postmodern critics of the “**colonial encounter**” have also viewed his research, and that of others of his generation, as being both morally tainted and theoretically suspect. Nevertheless, even his harshest critics recognize the careful thought, eloquent prose, and eye for detail that informed Evans-Pritchard’s ethnographic writing.

Max Gluckman and the “Manchester School”

Key Words: Manchester School, Rhodes-Livingstone Institute, rituals of rebellion, social process

Max Gluckman (1911–75) is recognized by many within the British anthropological tradition as the figure most responsible, perhaps even more so than Edmund Leach, for infusing Radcliffe-Brown’s formulation of social structure with an intensive focus on the mechanisms of social control and change. Ethnographically he helped to train a generation of anthropologists through his association with the **Rhodes-Livingstone Institute** (later, the **Zambian National Research Institute**) in the late 1930s and early 1940s; under his tutelage, such important figures as Victor Turner helped shift the focus in British social anthropology away from largely static and atemporal social structure toward a concern for dynamic **social process**.

A South African who had received his doctoral training in social anthropology at Oxford University, Gluckman was especially concerned with identifying and explaining the dynamics of social equilibrium and change in southern Africa. In 1949, following his association with the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute and after several years at Oxford University, Gluckman founded the Department of Social Anthropology at the University of Manchester, where he established a coterie of students committed to his distinctive approach to processual and political theoretical exposition. This fabled **Manchester School** of social anthropology was responsible for producing a number of the key texts in anthropology of the 1950s and 1960s, all of which bore the mark of Gluckman’s influence. His own body of work included a number of classics in the subgenres of political and legal anthropology (which he created), including *Rituals of Rebellion in Southeast Africa* (1954), *Custom and Conflict in Africa* (1955), *Order and Rebellion in Tribal Africa* (1963), and *Politics, Law and Ritual in Tribal Society* (1965).

The distinctive character of Gluckman’s research and theory derived from its overarching concern with the nature of social stability and its inverse, social change, interests that led him and his students to develop an original body of research in urban areas as well as the traditionally rural environments studied by anthropologists. In particular, the urbanizing and industrializing Copperbelt of central Africa, a region that straddles Zambia and the Democratic Republic of Congo, was an important site of research for a

number of anthropologists working out of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute, who sought to better understand processes of rural–urban migration.

With respect to anthropological theory, Gluckman is especially well known for developing the notion that all societies incorporate what he termed **rituals of rebellion**. These, he argued, were important “release valves” for any social order, because of their potential to minimize real conflict by sublimating it within ritual performance. Such performances were powerful because of their capacity to draw attention both to conflict itself and to the need for legitimate authority to contain disruptions of the social order. In this way, social stability was maintained through the incorporation of tension and hostility into conventional and socially legitimate ritual, thereby heading off true revolution. Local ideas about law and legality played a large role in this approach, because of the influence that Gluckman believed these had on the adjudication of disputes and conflict.

The Legacy of British Social Anthropology

Key Words: descent group, indirect rule

From the remainder of an exceptionally large and diverse corpus of British research, theoretical insight, and biography, a few additional contributors to the first decades of social anthropology merit attention. In the main, as Evans-Pritchard had done, the most significant ethnographic monographs from the 1930s through the 1960s expanded upon and gave cultural, historical, and/or political “teeth” to the structural-functionalist admonitions of Radcliffe-Brown.

Prominent among these additional contributors was Raymond Firth (1901–2002), whose 600-plus-page monograph *We the Tikopia* (1936) helped transform prevailing notions of what structural-functionalist ethnography could be by adding considerable historical and economic depth to his analysis of society in the Solomon Islands. Also, Edmund Leach’s lauded work *Political Systems of Highland Burma* (1954) infused Durkheimian structural-functional analysis, to that point predicated on the notion of a pre-reflective social solidarity, with a structuralism inspired by his celebrated “conversion” to the work of Lévi-Strauss, which led to the idea that common social conventions and institutions might be shared by otherwise very diverse linguistic and cultural groups. Likewise, Meyer Fortes (1906–83) wrote

prolifically concerning the complexity of social relations in Ghana (see, for instance, *The Web of Kinship among the Tallensi* [1949]) and drew sharp distinctions between the kind of social mechanisms responsible for creating solidarity in the domestic familial sphere (psychological and moral) and those responsible for maintaining solidarity within the larger jural and political **descent group**.

In addition to these, Victor Turner (1920–83), a student of Gluckman's, cultivated an extremely influential body of process-oriented research on social organization among the Ndembu of Zambia, before going on to be the pre-eminent figure in British symbolic anthropology. At an early stage in his career, the monograph *Schism and Continuity in an African Society* (1957) proved to be perhaps the most politically sophisticated structural-functional monograph of the period.

Lastly, the influence of British research, especially that of Radcliffe-Brown, was such that it also had a sustained impact in Boasian America, where Fred Eggan, who partially converted to structural-functionalism as a result of his interaction with Radcliffe-Brown in Chicago, infused the epistemology with his own diachronic and historical perspective.

The colonial encounter spoken of by later generations of anthropologists loomed large in the research of British social anthropologists in the first half of the twentieth century. This was primarily because the British Empire, a colonial power of global influence, occupied many territories, especially in Africa, perceived by all as ripe for ethnographic fieldwork—all, that is, except their native inhabitants. Accordingly, many anthropologists, including Evans-Pritchard, Fortes, and Gluckman, set about conducting intensive fieldwork among people who had little choice but to bear the presence of these intrusive strangers for what were often long periods of time.

In 1940, Fortes and Evans-Pritchard published *African Political Systems*, a controversial book of essays on African ethnography. Some of these essays aimed to counter the contention of evolutionary anthropologists that the evolution of pristine political organization, contrasted with kinship organization, was linked to high population density. The authors cited African examples to show that, contrary to this linkage, some groups with low population density had political organization, while other groups with high population density lacked political organization. Anthropologists critical of British social anthropology have used *African Political Systems* to

illustrate the shortcomings of this approach, which, they argue, paid insufficient attention to African history and, therefore, failed to recognize that these ethnographic exceptions were evolutionary distortions caused by colonialism and slavery. British social anthropologists have also been criticized for implicitly and explicitly supporting the British foreign policy of **indirect rule**, which relied on ethnographic knowledge to manipulate, co-opt, and cooperate with native leaders, thus avoiding the need to govern by deployment of brute force.

Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown were antagonists who sparred over theoretical details and never managed to agree on who the *real* functionalist was. Given the eventual rejection of functionalism as an epistemology in anthropology, this turned out to be a moot point, and the melodrama and rhetoric that characterized these early debates today seem somehow anachronistic. Nevertheless, it should not be forgotten that together, like Franz Boas, their counterpart in the United States, Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown gave British anthropology distinction and a twentieth-century identity that was grounded in empirical research and rigorous theory rather than the armchair speculation and hypothesizing of unilineal evolutionists such as Tylor and Morgan.

While Malinowski's variety of biocultural functionalism was the first to be discredited and discarded (together with his conclusions and personal biases) by his disciplinary progeny, his painstaking, long-term ethnographic fieldwork among the Trobriand Islanders continues to be the paradigmatic model for all graduate students heading "into the field." Likewise, the detail and quality of his numerous monographs established a seminal style of data analysis as literary genre that has yet to be displaced as a vehicle for the exposition of research within sociocultural anthropology. Just as importantly, the structural-functionalism pioneered by Radcliffe-Brown served as a bridge between the foundational work of Émile Durkheim and the interests of a second and then a third generation of British social anthropologists peopled by scholars of such high calibre and diverse abilities as Evans-Pritchard, Fortes, Leach, Gluckman, Firth, Douglas, and Turner. These anthropologists were able to combine notions of structure with a political and cultural nuance and sophistication that still stand up to scrutiny in the twenty-first century.

PART THREE

The Later Twentieth Century

Earlier in the twentieth century, both the British and French schools of social research fell heavily under the sway of Émile Durkheim and his intellectual progeny, especially Mauss, Lévi-Strauss, and Radcliffe-Brown. In North America, meanwhile, an altogether different configuration of anthropological knowledge was taking shape under the careful tutelage of Franz Boas. Unlike the structuralist and functionalist perspectives espoused by the Europeans, American anthropologists cultivated an avowedly historical approach that emphasized the radical diversity of cultural form, rather than its psychosocial solidarity. Despite its emphases on change through time and empiricism, this epistemology of culture historicism often sacrificed breadth of analysis for the sake of precision. As a result, even those innovations made by Mead and Kroeber, and later by cognitive anthropologists, have been seen by subsequent generations as theoretically impoverished. The perceived central weakness of historical particularism was precisely its inability to grasp broader cross-cultural historical patterns and processes.

In the later decades of the twentieth century, this tension between the particular and the general was to emerge as a central problem on both sides of the Atlantic for the rapidly expanding discipline of anthropology. While the nineteenth-century evolutionist schemes developed by Morgan and Tylor no longer seemed tenable to the increasingly sophisticated student of culture, the largely descriptive approach championed by Boas also seemed inadequate, in that it suffered from a dearth of explanatory theory. By midway through the twentieth century, many anthropologists felt the need for approaches that charted a middle course between these extremes—for approaches that united historical change and variation with social structure and integration, all within an analytically powerful body of theory. In filling this lacuna, the work of several anthropologists, including Leslie White, Julian Steward, and Marvin Harris, has been very influential. The ideas of Karl Marx enjoyed a

revival, particularly in the thinking of anthropological political economists. One of the most enduring and influential twentieth-century perspectives for anthropology, particularly in its most recent schools and epistemologies, was that of Max Weber. As well, other theoreticians have broken new ground in the study of human social and cultural life. As a result, the story of later-twentieth-century anthropology, contrasted with that of the earlier part of the century, cannot be told easily in terms of national traditions of theory but instead must be approached in terms of the individual theories and theorists themselves.

Cognitive Anthropology

Key Words: cognitive anthropology, emic, etic, phonemics, phonetics

By the time Franz Boas died, his grip on American anthropology had loosened. In the post-Boasian era, historical particularism faded into the background of an increasingly crowded landscape of anthropological theories. One of these theories was **cognitive anthropology**. Cognitive anthropology was rooted in Boasian cultural relativism with input from anthropological linguistics. Its theoretical orientation was **emic**, contrasted with **etic**. This contrast originated in the 1950s with linguist Kenneth Pike (1912–2000), who made an analogy with the contrast between **phonemics** and **phonetics** in linguistics. Phonemics is the study of linguistic *meaning* created through sound, while phonetics is the study of linguistic *sounds* themselves. Linguists can study the sound systems of languages for their own sake, with language speakers supplying raw data. To discover which sounds are meaningful, however, they must rely on language speakers as authorities. Phonetics represents the point of view of the “outsider,” the linguist investigator, while phonemics represents the point of view of the “insider,” the speaker being investigated. Relating this distinction to the anthropological fieldwork technique of participant-observation, Pike decided that participation was “emic” because, in principle, its goal was to enable anthropologists to think and behave like native peoples, while observation was “etic” because its goal was to have anthropologists remain detached. The emic approach was “seeing things from the native’s point of view,” which, according to Pike, would promote cross-cultural understanding and combat ethnocentrism in accordance with the doctrine of cultural relativism. Pike advocated both emic and etic approaches to anthropology, but he preferred the emic.

Edward Sapir

Key Word: Sapir-Whorf hypothesis

Another precursor to cognitive anthropology was the **Sapir-Whorf hypothesis**, named after anthropological linguist Edward Sapir and his associate Benjamin Lee Whorf. Sapir (1884–1939) was a student of Boas and

close friend of Benedict and Mead. Like them, he wrote poetry and explored the relationship between personality and culture. Talented both artistically and mathematically, Sapir devoted most of his career to the study of language, first in Canada, then at the University of Chicago, and finally at Yale University, where he co-founded the anthropology department. Whorf (1879–1941) was a chemical engineer who worked for the Hartford Fire Insurance Company in Hartford, Connecticut. Developing an interest in the indigenous languages of Mesoamerica, he began to study with Sapir at Yale in nearby New Haven. Under Sapir's influence, Whorf disciplined his penchant for philosophizing about the relationship between language and culture and in the 1930s collaborated with Sapir in the formulation of their hypothesis.

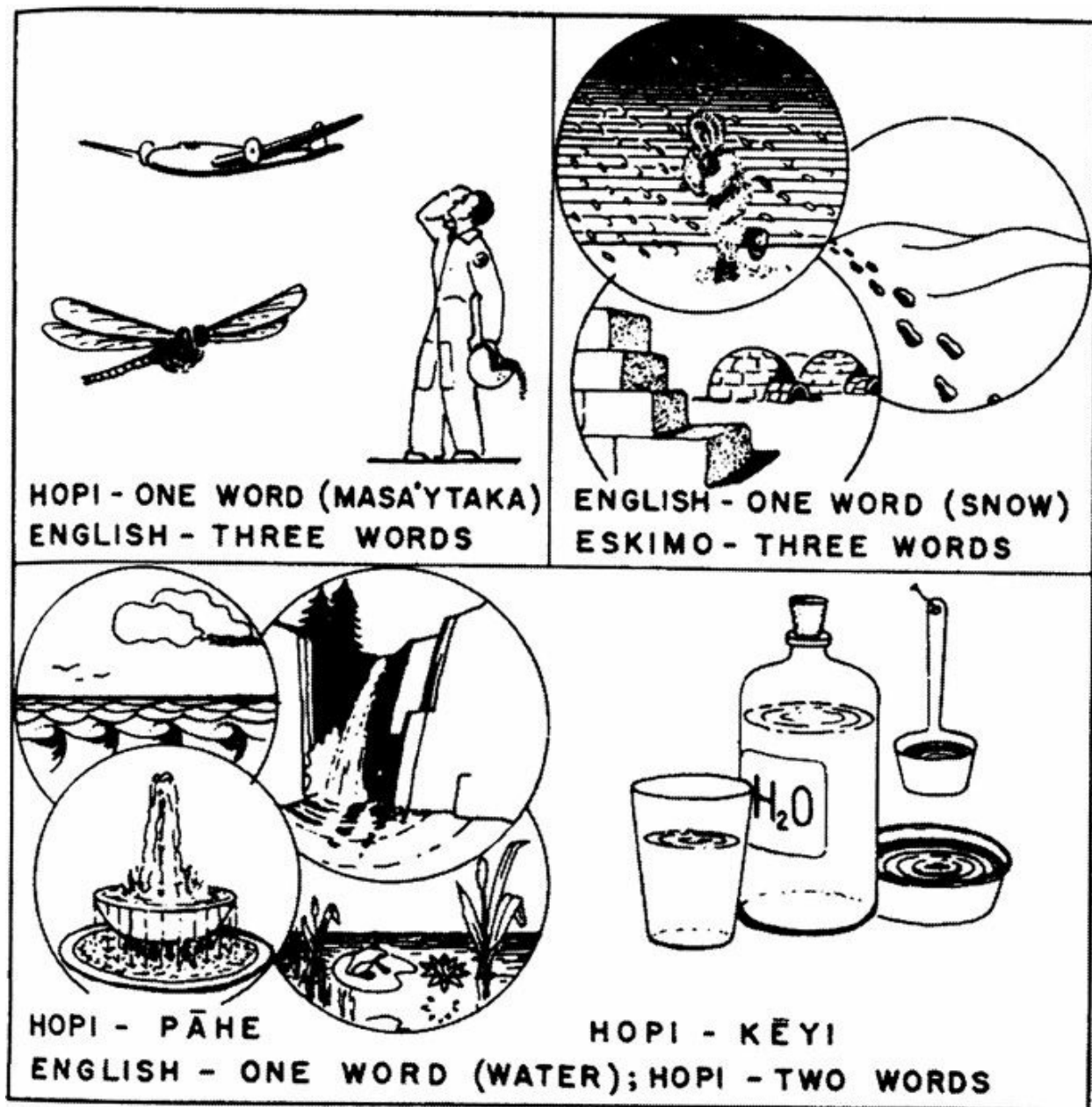


FIGURE 3.1 The Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis: The hypothesis of Edward Sapir (1884–1939) and Benjamin Lee Whorf (1897–1941) states that languages classify experiences differently.

From *Language, Thought and Reality: Selected Writings of Benjamin Lee Whorf*, edited by John B. Carroll. © 1956 Massachusetts Institute of Technology, by permission of The MIT Press.

The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, sometimes called the principle of linguistic

relativity, expresses the view that the mental structures of languages and cultures are correlated—each one influences the other. Sapir and Whorf were especially interested in the influence of language on culture, which Whorf in particular held to be significantly determining. Their chief example was a contrast between the Hopi language and culture (Hopi is a language spoken in the southwestern United States) and a combination of European languages and cultures called Standard Average European, or SAE. In SAE languages, the concept of time is “objectified” by being quantified in expressions such as “ten days.” In contrast, in the Hopi language, time is “subjectified” by lacking quantification in expressions that instead represent time as a process of “becoming later.” SAE languages also use objective “mass” nouns such as “food” and “water,” which must be individualized with adjectives such as “some” and adjectival phrases such as “a glass of.” The Hopi language, on the other hand, lacks mass nouns; instead, every noun is individualized, rendering it subjective without the need for qualification. Furthermore, SAE speakers objectify the concept of space by using spatial metaphors in rhetorical expressions such as “make a point,” “grasp an idea,” and “come straight to the conclusion.” However, Hopi speakers subjectify space with special parts of speech called “tensors.” In each of these cases, according to Sapir and Whorf, the contrast between the structure of SAE and Hopi languages is correlated with a contrast between objectifying SAE and subjectifying Hopi cultures, which “structure” the world differently. Like French structuralists, Sapir and Whorf believed that culture is carried around in people’s heads as a classificatory logic that creates meaning. Different cultures have different meaning systems, which, like the phonemic systems of language, are equally worthy yet mutually incomprehensible in the absence of a means of cross-cultural communication.

Ethnoscience and the “New Ethnography”

Key Words: componential analysis, ethnolinguistics, ethnoscience, folk taxonomies, New Ethnography, semantic domain

Cognitive anthropology emerged during the 1960s when a faction of American anthropologists, growing out of the tradition of Boas, sought to make their emic orientation explicit and, inspired by linguistics, to improve their methodological rigour. The school, sometimes called **ethnoscience**,

ethnolinguistics, or the **New Ethnography**, is best known for its investigative techniques, devised mainly by practitioners Harold Conklin (b. 1926), Charles Frake (b. 1930), and Ward Goodenough (1919–2013). The object of these techniques was to describe native cognition, or perception, as a **semantic domain**, or domain of meaning, with a cognitive “code” that could be “cracked.” The most compelling technique of this sort was **componential analysis**, which generated **folk taxonomies** of meaning resembling the Linnaean taxonomy of Western biology. Just as the Linnaean taxonomy classifies living things using a hierarchy of categories defined by biological criteria, folk taxonomies classify cultural realms using hierarchies of categories defined by cultural criteria. The goal of componential analysis was to uncover these criteria. By interviewing native informants in the manner of anthropological linguists, who utter contrasting sounds and then ask informants whether the contrasts are meaningful, componential analysts produced “cultural grammars,” or “maps” of semantic domains, ranging from Subanun boils and Zeltal firewood to “ethnobotanical” classifications of Amazonian pharmaceutical plants. Cognitive anthropologists shared the view that culture is a formal system of rules for thought and behaviour. Unlike in Western biology, however, where the Linnaean classification has traditionally been held to be “right” and folk classifications of living things “wrong,” in cognitive anthropology all classifications were treated as culturally context-dependent.

The popularity of cognitive anthropology peaked in the 1960s and then declined. Today, by name, cognitive anthropology is an uncommon anthropological subfield. Anthropologists interested in cognition are more likely to associate themselves with other cognitive sciences, including cognitive linguistics, computer science, and even the study of artificial intelligence. Meanwhile, at the peak of its popularity, cognitive anthropology had attracted criticism from anthropologists of opposing theoretical orientations, conspicuous among them new cultural evolutionists and materialists and those more interested in hermeneutically based approaches to the study of culture.

Cultural Neo-evolutionism

Key Word: cultural neo-evolutionism

An outstanding new theme in post-Boasian anthropology was a revival of nomothetic approaches, which had been eclipsed by Boas's preference for the idiographic approach of historical particularism. The search for cross-cultural generalizations was aided by the Human Relations Area Files, established in the 1940s by George Peter Murdock (1897–1985) at Yale University and used in the 1950s to do research for Whiting and Child's *Child Training and Personality*. The outstanding new nomothetic theory was **cultural neo-evolutionism**, a reformulation of nineteenth-century classical cultural evolutionism that in some ways was anti-Boasian.

The new cultural evolutionism was the brainchild of four American anthropologists: Leslie White, Julian Steward, Marshall Sahlins (before his conversion to French structuralism), and Elman Service, with input from British archaeologist V. Gordon Childe (1892–1957). All played significant roles in the development of neo-evolutionist theory, and their perspectives are worth discussing in some detail. In addition to Childe's contribution, cultural evolutionism also had a significant impact in the subdiscipline of archaeology, where it informed a body of new theory called the New Archaeology.

Leslie White

Key Words: culturology, entropy, layer-cake model of culture, second law of thermodynamics, sui generis, thermodynamic law, thermodynamics

Leslie White (1900–75) was an anthropologist trained in the Boasian tradition but who broke rank with Boas radically during his long career at the University of Michigan. His Marxist, or Marxist-like, orientation made him a controversial figure both on campus and in the anthropology profession, so much so that he was investigated by the FBI. White's views are summarized in two books: *The Science of Culture* (1949), a collection of essays, and *The Evolution of Culture* (1959), an exposition of the course and process of evolution.



FIGURE 3.2 Leslie White (1900–75): White was the leading exponent of mid-twentieth-century cultural neo-evolutionism.

Photograph by Blackstone Studios, New York.

White considered culture to be a system of its own kind, *sui generis*, akin

to Kroeber's concept of the superorganic. Cultural "laws" would constitute the science of **culturology**. The linchpin of the system was **thermodynamics**, the study of the conversion of forms of energy in the universe. White was impressed with the **second law of thermodynamics**, which stated that the universe is running down structurally and dynamically, resulting in increased **entropy**, or disorder. According to White, biological evolution works in the opposite direction, taking "negative entropy" from the universe and increasing order in the production of complex forms of life. Cultural evolution, which supplants biological evolution in the case of *Homo sapiens* and ancestral species, enhances this trend. To explain the evolution of culture, White proposed a **thermodynamic law**: culture evolves as the amount of energy harnessed per capita per year is increased or as the efficiency of the means of putting this energy to work is increased. The law was symbolized $E \times T > P$ —energy times technology yields cultural product. White defined four major stages of cultural evolution, each of which began with an energy "revolution." The first revolution was the invention of tools, which increased the ability of the human body to obtain food calories. The second was the "Neolithic Revolution," a term coined by archaeologist Childe to describe the increased control over food energy achieved by the domestication of plants and animals. The third and fourth revolutions were the harnessing of fossil fuels in the eighteenth century and of atomic energy in the twentieth century. In between these revolutions, culture evolved as the technology for using these new energy sources improved.

An integral part of White's thermodynamic system was his **layer-cake model of culture**, a depiction of culture comprising a layer of technology and economy at the bottom, a layer of ideology at the top, and a layer of social and political organization in between. In the "determination" of cultural evolution, the bottom layer predominated, because innovations in technology and energy took place there. In assigning priority to technology and economy over ideology as the impetus for cultural change, White was an avowed cultural materialist. Some of his materialism came from Marxism, which he is alleged to have "discovered" on a trip to the Soviet Union in the 1920s. This was the interest that caused him to be put under surveillance by the FBI. Connected to Marxism was the work of Lewis Henry Morgan, whose views on the importance of private property impressed Friedrich Engels. White also "discovered" Morgan and became determined to rehabilitate Morgan's reputation as a cultural evolutionist while criticizing Franz Boas for bringing

that reputation into disrepute. White's criticism of Boas (posthumously) was even stronger than Derek Freeman's criticism of Margaret Mead.

Julian Steward

Key Words: adaptation, band, cultural ecology, multilineal, potlatch, unilineal, universal

While White was promulgating evolutionism in Michigan, an antagonist was gathering strength in Illinois: Julian Steward (1902–72), the “father” of modern **cultural ecology**. Steward, another Boasian by intellectual upbringing, was a long-time professor at the University of Illinois who influenced a host of distinguished political and economic anthropologists, including Morton Fried (1923–86), Andrew Vayda (b. 1931), Eric Wolf, and Elman Service. Cultural ecology nurtured a nomothetic approach to anthropology because it focused on the articulation between culture and nature, linking anthropology to nomothetic natural sciences such as biology, demography, and chemistry. Steward's work grew out of the “culture area” concept used by Boasians Alfred Louis Kroeber and Clark Wissler to demarcate American Native groups. Each group inhabited a geographical area to which, through culture, it adapted. **Adaptation** became the rubric of cultural ecology.

In 1936, Steward published a seminal essay on the economic and social basis of bands. In this essay he defined **band** as distinguished from what Service later called “tribe,” “chiefdom,” and “state.” He also defined three types of bands—patrilineal, matrilineal, and “composite”—and linked each type to particular ecological circumstances. Steward's approach prompted some Boasians to rethink their eclectic approach to anthropological explanation and to concentrate instead on cultural ecology. The result was a reinterpretation of some famous ethnographically reported events, notably the Northwest Coast ceremony of the **potlatch**, which Ruth Benedict had depicted as a conspicuously wasteful drive for social status but which Helen Codere (1917–2009) and Wayne Suttles (1918–2005) later explained as an ecologically adaptive, redistributive feast.

As a cultural ecologist, Steward was not primarily a cultural evolutionist. Nevertheless, he took enough interest in evolutionism to find White's pronouncements extreme. He distanced himself from White by calling the

latter's brand of evolutionism **universal** and his own brand **multilineal**. He called the nineteenth-century brand **unilineal**. Implied by these labels was Steward's view that he was a specialist while White was a generalist. The labels "unilineal" and "multilineal" meant that classical cultural evolutionists believed that evolution proceeds in only one direction and cannot skip stages, whereas Steward believed that evolution can branch off in numerous directions as cultures adapt to varied circumstances. For years, Steward and White sparred over points of cultural evolutionary theory, with Steward accusing White of being so general that he could not explain anything in particular and White accusing Steward of being so particular that he could scarcely be called an evolutionist. It took two of their colleagues, Sahlins and Service, to resolve this dispute in 1960.

Marshall Sahlins and Elman Service

Key Words: general evolution, specific evolution

For many years, Marshall Sahlins and Elman Service (1915–96) were colleagues at the University of Michigan, where they worked in close association with Leslie White. A one-time student of Julian Steward, Service maintained an interest in the ecological basis of social groupings, the theoretical framework for his popular text *Primitive Social Organization* (1962), which featured the fourfold division and evolutionary sequence of bands, tribes, chiefdoms, and states. Sahlins began his work in economic anthropology and was a strong proponent of cultural evolutionism and materialism before he began to combine French structural and historical analyses in the late 1960s. In 1960, Sahlins and Service co-authored *Evolution and Culture*, in which they sought to reconcile the views of Steward and White. In the time-honoured anthropological tradition of treating biology and culture as analogues, they argued that, like biological evolution, cultural evolution has two different dimensions. The dimension of **general evolution** was being pursued by White, who was concerned with long-range evolutionary progress and trends, while the dimension of **specific evolution** was being pursued by Steward, whose explanation of local adaptation was analogous to Darwin's mechanism of natural selection. Having demonstrated that White and Steward were really complementary rather than antagonistic, Sahlins and Service settled down to a decade of work together at Michigan,

where, with White, they formed a powerful evolutionary triumvirate. The “Michigan school” influenced a number of other cultural evolutionists and ecologists, for example, Alexander Alland Jr. (b. 1931), Robert Carneiro (b. 1927), and Yehudi Cohen (1928–98), who kept the nomothetic approach to cultural anthropology alive. Later, Sahlins moved to the University of Chicago and Service moved to the University of California at Santa Barbara, Sahlins largely abandoning and Service maintaining their respective cultural evolutionary orientations.

The New Archaeology

Key Words: culture-historical archaeology, ethos, general systems theory, hypothetico-deductive model, Midwestern Taxonomic Method, New Archaeology, processual archaeology

The new cultural evolutionism had a major impact on prehistoric archaeology, mainly through White. Since its establishment in the mid-nineteenth century, prehistoric archaeology had progressed through several stages linked to stages in the development of cultural anthropology. There was functionalist archaeology, Marxist archaeology, and, under the influence of Boas, **culture-historical archaeology**, represented in the United States by the **Midwestern Taxonomic Method**. Archaeologist Betty Meggers (1921–2012), a student of White, was inspired by his thermodynamic formula for cultural evolution, $E \times T > P$. Finding the culture-historical approach unproductive, she decided to apply the formula to archaeology, believing that if archaeologists *knew* technology (T) and environment (E), they could *reconstruct* cultural product (P). This idea was developed further by another student of White’s, Lewis Binford (1930–2011), who became the leader of the **New Archaeology** of the 1960s.

Binford grew up with the “old” culture-historical archaeology but changed under the influence of White. He decided that archaeology ought to be an integral part of anthropology because archaeologists and anthropologists share the same goal: to explain similarities and differences among cultures. To “explain” meant to offer generalizations about cultural systems and cultural evolution. Binford acknowledged that cultures change in response to both the natural environment and other cultures, but he maintained that, in explaining change, some parts of culture are more

important than others. He rejected the conception of culture as “shared values,” a concept promulgated by psychologically oriented students of Boas, such as Benedict and, later, Clyde Kluckhohn (1905–60), for whom culture was **ethos**, or spiritual character. Instead, Binford adopted White’s layer-cake model of culture and argued that, in archaeology, artifacts, as objects of material culture, can reflect all three layers, yielding a well-balanced picture of cultures in the past. To realize this potential, archaeologists need to be trained as ethnologists so they can learn how artifacts function in the present and then “read” these functions back in time. Under Binford’s influence, the New Archaeology revived the nineteenth-century “comparative method.”

Aiming to make archaeology scientific, Binford adopted a number of nomothetic devices. One was the **hypothetico-deductive model** for scientific explanation, developed by philosopher of science Carl G. Hempel (1905–97). This model directed scientists to hypothesize “covering laws” from which specific circumstances could be deduced—predicted or retrodicted—and then compared with empirical reality. Another was **general systems theory**, a cybernetic model for culture that involved “feedback loops” and “positive,” or system-maintaining, and “negative,” or system-changing, cause-and-effect chains. Binford argued vigorously against psychological explanations of culture. Like White and Kroeber (when he promoted the concept of the superorganic), Binford opposed the great man theory of history, believing instead that human behaviour is determined by forces—laws—of which individuals are largely unaware and over which they can exert little control.

This hyper-scientific, anti-humanistic, and “positivist” attitude made the new cultural evolutionism and the New Archaeology pills too bitter for many anthropologists to swallow. Because of its preoccupation with cultural process, the New Archaeology came to be called **processual archaeology**. Beginning in the 1980s, it attracted severe criticism from post-processualists, who saw in it almost everything that was wrong with modern science. At the same time, in cultural anthropology, “postmodernists” severely criticized modern science for many of the same reasons. In reaction to these trends, to defend science, Binford teamed up with other like-minded, outspoken anthropologists, notably Marvin Harris.

Cultural Materialism

Key Word: cultural materialism

An important part of the resurgence of nomothetic anthropology in the post-Boasian era was **cultural materialism**, an unabashedly scientific perspective developed by iconoclastic anthropologist Marvin Harris (1927–2001). Harris was a native New Yorker who spent most of his career at Columbia University before moving to the University of Florida in 1981. Early on, he conducted fieldwork in Brazil and Mozambique, which transformed his outlook and helped lead to his formulation of the theory of cultural materialism. The tenets of cultural materialism are set forth in greatest detail in 4 of his 17 books: *The Nature of Cultural Things* (1964), *The Rise of Anthropological Theory* (1968), *Cultural Materialism* (1979), and *Theories of Culture in Postmodern Times* (1999). *Cultural Materialism* was his theoretical manifesto.

Marvin Harris

Key Words: behavioural domain, cultural eclectics, cultural idealists, false consciousness, infrastructural determinism, mental domain, universal pattern

Harris began to develop cultural materialism in an effort to purge modern anthropology of some of the legacy of Boas and continued to develop it in an effort to combat the spread of new nonscientific and antiscientific attitudes in the profession.

Cultural materialism addresses a central problem for scientific anthropology: people can be both subjects and objects of scientific investigation. They can think and say things about themselves, just as scientists think and say things about them. Where, then, does true knowledge reside? The answer, according to Harris, can be found by maintaining two pairs of cross-cutting epistemological criteria: mental versus behavioural domains and emic versus etic domains. The **mental domain** is what people *think*; the **behavioural domain** is what people *do*. The emic domain belongs to the participant, the etic domain to the observer. Combined, these two pairs of distinctions yield four epistemological perspectives: the emic behavioural

perspective is what people think about their own behaviour; the emic mental perspective is what people think about their own thoughts; the etic behavioural perspective is what the observer observes about other people's behaviour; and the etic mental perspective is what the observer observes about other people's thoughts. While all four perspectives are *possible*, two are *problematic* and ought to be approached with caution. The emic behavioural perspective is problematic because, according to Harris, people can develop **false consciousness** and misrepresent the meaning of their own behaviour to themselves and to others. The etic mental perspective is problematic because it is difficult to find out what is going on inside someone else's head. According to Harris, the etic behavioural and emic mental perspectives lack these drawbacks and are more likely to yield useful information.

In Harris's understanding of scientific anthropology, there is room for both emic and etic perspectives, but they must be kept separate and maintain their own operational definitions and data languages. In the end, the etic perspective predominates. In emics, the native informant is the ultimate judge of validity; in etics, it is the scientific observer. Both natives and scientists can be "objective," but when natives are objective, they themselves become scientists. For Harris, objectivity is not mere intersubjectivity, or mutual understanding and the ability to participate in one another's cultures; there is only one objective truth—the etic truth of science.

Like White, Harris divides culture into several levels, which form a **universal pattern**, a modification of Leslie White's layer-cake model of culture. Harris's levels are mode of production, mode of reproduction, domestic economy, political economy, and behavioural superstructure. Each has an etic behavioural dimension and an emic mental dimension. Favouring the etic behavioural dimension, Harris combines the modes of production and reproduction into the component etic behavioural infrastructure, combines domestic and political economies into the component etic behavioural structure, and relabels behavioural superstructure the component etic behavioural superstructure. A fourth component, mental and emic superstructure, applies to all levels of the universal pattern. The core of cultural materialism is the principle of **infrastructural determinism**, the name Harris gave to his presupposition that, more often than not, culture changes first in the etic infrastructure and then reverberates through etic structure and superstructure to affect emic superstructure last. In Harris's

vocabulary, **cultural idealists** explain culture change as occurring in the opposite direction, while **cultural eclectics** explain culture change inconsistently.

The “materialism” in cultural materialism derives from Marxism, which Harris acknowledged as the source of this part of his theory. But, according to Harris, Marx and Engels omitted mode of reproduction from their formulation; confused mental and behavioural and emic and etic realms; and were saddled with the Hegelian dialectic, a metaphysical rather than scientific principle. Once Harris rid dialectical materialism of these “mistakes,” the name cultural materialism seemed more appropriate.

Why infrastructural determinism? According to Harris, it is because infrastructure is the primary interface between culture and nature and the place where people are obliged to start using culture to cope with nature in orderly ways. Scientists, looking for order, are probably going to find it there.

As a theoretical agenda for anthropology, cultural materialism had much in common with neo-evolutionism and the New Archaeology. All three of these approaches are, or were, staunchly pro-science. All have been espoused by forceful anthropology personalities, notably Harris, who spent much of the latter part of his career defending scientific anthropology against inroads by structuralist, symbolic, interpretive, and postmodern approaches. In several high-profile cases, Harris excoriated Lévi-Strauss and other structuralists for their symbolic analyses of myth, hygiene, and cuisine, and he sided with Michael Harner (b. 1929) in his debate with structuralist Marshall Sahlins over whether Aztecs practised cannibalism for calories or religion. In these efforts, he was criticized for theoretical intolerance, “one-sidedness,” and a lack of appreciation for alternative “culturally sensitive” ways of doing anthropology. Although the number of Harris’s “disciples” remained small, he is widely credited with stimulating polemical discussions that enriched anthropology overall. He also brought anthropology to a wide readership with popular bestselling books such as *Cows, Pigs, Wars, and Witches* (1974), *Cannibals and Kings* (1977), and *America Now* (1981). The *Washington Post* once characterized Harris as a “storm center in his field.” This characterization sums up what many anthropologists consider to be his central legacy.

Nature versus Nurture

Key Words: biologize, nature, nurture

Another very different intellectual current in late-twentieth-century anthropology was the move in some quarters to **biologize** cultural anthropology. All the earlier Boasian and post-Boasian anthropological “-isms” had shared an opposition to such hereditarian interpretations of human cultural variation. **Nurture**, not **nature**, was a hallmark of early-twentieth-century anthropology in Britain, France, and the United States, where anthropologists sought to put much of Darwin’s century, the nineteenth century, behind them.

In the decades following World War II, from the late 1940s through the early 1970s, anthropology expanded in universities, especially in North America, where the discipline was organized into the four subdisciplines of cultural, physical (now often called biological), archaeological, and linguistic anthropology. As universities prospered, these subdisciplines grew and became highly specialized, but cultural anthropology dominated, attracting by far the largest number of practitioners and setting the intellectual tone for the profession. Meanwhile, in biological anthropology, specialists such as osteologists, primatologists, and geneticists practised their trades and were largely ignored by their more academically influential colleagues. But in the 1960s, this relationship changed.

Biology of Behaviour

Key Words: australopiths, Jensenism, naked apes, scientific racism

The impetus for change was the emergence in biological anthropology of an interest in the biology of human *behaviour*. Preliminary explorations of this topic were several “popular” accounts of human aggression, territoriality, and sexuality as “genetic.” Two examples were *African Genesis* (1961) and *The Territorial Imperative* (1966) by Chicago playwright and anthropology aficionado Robert Ardrey (1908–80). Ardrey was captivated by the earlier discovery of South African fossil **australopiths**, an extinct group of ape-like human ancestors. In *African Genesis*, he argued that one species of

australopith, *Australopithecus africanus*, killed off another species, *Australopithecus robustus*, and that all modern people are descended from this “killer ape.” In other words, violence was “in our genes.” In *The Territorial Imperative*, he pursued a similar hereditarian argument that a primitive human propensity to seek and defend private property made socialist programmes of communal property “contrary to human nature.” A third, and more notorious, example was *The Naked Ape* (1967) by primate zoologist Desmond Morris (b. 1928). Morris attributed all kinds of human characteristics to evolved bipedal locomotion, including pendulous female breasts, which, according to him, evolved as substitutes for female buttocks when males needed a sexual symbol appropriate for “face-to-face” sexual intercourse. Generally, cultural anthropologists and mainstream biological anthropologists disputed the claims of these authors as unsupported by science, and, in disrespect, some dubbed their approach “**naked apery**.” Nevertheless, in criticizing naked apery as extreme, some anthropologists began to wonder what *might* be true about a biological basis for human nature.

Two other anthropologically noteworthy controversies of the 1960s concerned the biological basis of race. The first took place in the early part of the decade following the publication of biological anthropologist Carleton Coon’s book *The Origin of Races* (1963). Coon (1904–81) proposed that five major geographical races of the species *Homo sapiens* had originated in the species *Homo erectus* and evolved into *Homo sapiens* separately, the Caucasoid race achieving *sapiens* status first, the Negroid race last. For these views, Coon was accused of **scientific racism**. The second controversy took place in the late 1960s when educational psychologist Arthur Jensen (1923–2012) proposed that variation in intelligence quotient, or IQ, was predominantly genetic and that the measured 15-point difference in IQ between American blacks and whites could never be entirely eliminated by education. Anthropologists’ objections to this proposition were so strong that the term “**Jensenism**” became synonymous with “racism” in subsequent debates about genes and behaviour. One such subsequent debate was precipitated by Richard Herrnstein and Charles Murray’s enormously controversial book *The Bell Curve: Intelligence and Class Structure in American Life* (1994). Herrnstein (1930–94) and Murray (b. 1943) argued that variation in intelligence is highly heritable and correlated with variation in social success, making the upper class a kind of “genetic meritocracy.”

Anthropologists' reactions to *The Bell Curve* were just as negative as they had been to the work of Jensen. Still, in some quarters, the feeling lurked that Jensen had been treated unfairly, that his research had been rejected for ideological rather than scientific reasons, and that the biological basis of human behavioural differences was a legitimate subject for scientific investigation.

The New Physical Anthropology

Key Words: biocultural anthropology, New Physical Anthropology, typological thinking

In the wake of the scientific and political controversies created by Ardrey, Morris, Coon, and Jensen, other developments brought cultural and biological anthropologists closer together. One such development was promulgation of the **New Physical Anthro pology**, launched in the 1950s by biological anthropologist Sherwood L. Washburn (1911–2000).

The New Physical Anthropology had little to do with the new cultural evolutionism and the New Archaeology launched at approximately the same time. Washburn simply urged biological anthropologists to embrace the Synthetic Theory of Evolution, the synthesis of Darwinism and Mendelian genetics that biologists had achieved in the 1930s. Extended to biological anthropology, this synthesis directed anthropologists to study biological process more than form and to abandon **typolog ical thinking**, or thinking in terms of fixed “pure” races. This change in scientific attitude made biological anthropology more acceptable to cultural anthropologists. Meanwhile, biological anthropologists worked out cultural explanations for the geographical distribution of sickle-cell anemia and intolerance of lactose, or milk sugar. These explanatory successes led to the emergence of the new field of **biocultural anthropology**, aimed at exploring interactions between human biology and culture in accordance with the principles of evolutionary ecology. The resulting cooperation between biological and cultural anthropologists primed some anthropologists to be more receptive to the next wave of biological explanations of human behaviour.

The 1970s saw the emergence, or ascendance, of three such bio-behavioural explanatory approaches, which affected anthropology to varying degrees: human ethology, behavioural genetics, and sociobiology.

Ethology and Behavioural Genetics

Key Words: behavioural genetics, body language, ethology, fixed action pattern, human biogram, innate releasing mechanism, key stimulus, kinesics, phenotype, polygenic, proxemics

The first bio-behavioural approach to come of age in the 1970s, human **ethology**, grew out of animal psychology and zoology and involved a commitment to hereditarian concepts such as **fixed action pattern**, **innate releasing mechanism**, and **key stimulus**. Human ethologists examined both the ontogeny, or individual growth, and phylogeny, or evolutionary growth, of biologically linked behaviours that, in the language of ethology, constitute the **human biogram**. According to ethologists, cultural “universals,” like some facial expressions and gestures, are potentially genetic. A diluted form of ethology found its way into the anthropological study of non-verbal communication, or **body language**, in the sciences of **kinesics** and **proxemics**, the studies of body motion and body position. Anthropologists Lionel Tiger (b. 1937) and Robin Fox (b. 1934) also promoted a diluted form of ethology in books such as *Men in Groups* (1970) and *The Imperial Animal* (1971), where they expounded their views on “natural” human tendencies. While human ethology could trace its lineage back to Charles Darwin’s treatise *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and the Animals* (1872), and while it had popular appeal, the approach failed to earn widespread scientific respect. Many critics ended up using the adjective “ethological” to describe any proposition that recklessly attributed human behaviour to heredity.

The second bio-behavioural approach to be developed in the period was human **behavioural genetics**: the extension of genetic analysis from anatomy and physiology to behaviour, which behavioural geneticists treat as a **phenotype**, or product of gene action. Behavioural geneticists study both “normal” and “abnormal” behavioural phenotypes in order to determine whether they might have either a simple Mendelian or a more complex **polygenic** component. Some human behavioural geneticists rely on contrasts of the behaviours of twins reared together and apart to help them assign the sources of behavioural differences to nature and nurture. Arthur Jensen’s investigation of race, genes, and IQ employed some of these techniques, as did *The Bell Curve*. Because behavioural genetics is a highly specialized science published in journals read by few anthropologists, it has proved

challenging to mount effective scientific, contrasted with ideological, counterarguments from the anthropological perspective. One set of stimulating counterarguments can be found in biological anthropologist Jonathan Marks's thought-provoking books, including *What It Means to Be 98% Chimpanzee: Apes, People, and Their Genes* (2002), *Why I Am Not a Scientist: Anthropology and Modern Knowledge* (2009), and *Tales of the Ex-Apes: How We Think about Human Evolution* (2015). Marks (b. 1955) urges caution in accepting at face value geneticists' claims to have discovered individual genes that govern human behaviour.

Sociobiology

Key Words: biology of nepotism, evolutionary psychology, inclusive fitness, kin selection, reciprocal altruism, sociobiology, xenophobic

The bio-behavioural approach that made the greatest inroads in late-twentieth-century anthropology was **sociobiology**. This approach became controversial almost immediately after the publication of Edward O. Wilson's landmark book *Sociobiology: The New Synthesis* (1975).

Wilson (b. 1929) was a Harvard University entomologist who had been working on the evolutionary problem of altruism, or self-sacrificing behaviours, such as sterile worker ants devoting themselves to helping a queen ant reproduce. The problem with altruism was how to explain it in terms of Darwinian evolution by natural selection. If altruistic behaviour is genetic, it should be subject to the action of natural selection, but the result of such action should be the reduction or elimination of the genes responsible. Still, altruism persisted. How? Earlier zoologists had proposed the mechanism of group selection, whereby individuals sacrifice themselves for the good of groups and then, as group members, benefit indirectly. This mechanism was never entirely convincing, however, so in the early 1970s a number of geneticists proposed the alternative mechanism of **kin selection**. This mechanism became the scientific cornerstone of Wilson's book.

Wilson solved the problem of altruism essentially by defining it out of existence. Altruism is not really altruistic; instead, it is "selfish," as he explained with his new concept of **inclusive fitness**. According to Wilson, the genetic basis of most behaviours is polygenic, meaning the result of the action of multiple genes. Genetic relatives share these genes, so individuals

who sacrifice themselves can still transmit their sacrificing genes to future generations, as long as they sacrifice themselves for relatives. Sociobiology has been called the **biology of nepotism**, an apt nickname, because sociobiologists predicted that genes incline individuals to behave more favourably to relatives than to non-relatives and more favourably to close relatives than to distant ones. In this way, individuals maximize their inclusive Darwinian fitness and reproductive success. Evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins (b. 1941) captured many of these ideas in the title of his provocative book *The Selfish Gene* (1976). More recently, Dawkins has achieved notoriety for his defense of evolution in *The Greatest Show on Earth: The Evidence for Evolution* (2009) and, especially, for his defence of atheism in *The God Delusion* (2009).

For sociobiology, life is a series of strategic choices in which individuals unconsciously assess the personal costs and benefits of alternative behaviours and end up choosing the alternative with the greatest inclusive yield. Because sociobiologists argued that overall degrees of genetic relatedness can be quantified—parents and children share 50 per cent of their genes, half-siblings 25 per cent, “first” cousins 12.5 per cent, and so forth—they were able to make precise predictions about behaviour and then compare them with empirical reality. To explain altruism among non-relatives, sociobiologist Robert Trivers (b. 1943) introduced the supplementary evolutionary mechanism of **reciprocal altruism**. According to reciprocal altruism, individuals behave altruistically toward non-relatives in the understanding that non-relatives will behave altruistically toward them, a kind of biological Golden Rule.

Some of the most controversial pronouncements of sociobiology concerned differences between males and females. Both males and females are motivated to maximize their inclusive fitness but, according to sociobiologists, in fundamentally different ways. In species with two distinct sexes, males produce a large number of mobile sperm and do not themselves bear children, while females produce a small number of non-mobile eggs and do bear children. These biological differences imply the evolution of behavioural differences. Males are selected to compete for females because females are a reproductively relevant resource. The reproductive potential of males depends on the number of females they can inseminate. On the other hand, females are selected to resist male advances because, once inseminated, they cannot become pregnant again until after giving birth. The reproductive

potential of females depends on the “quality,” not quantity, of male suitors. By depicting males as sexually indiscriminate and females as “choosy,” sociobiologists exposed themselves to the criticism that they were affirming Western sex-role stereotypes. By proposing that both males and females prefer their “own kind” over “foreigners,” sociobiologists exposed themselves to the further charges that they are racist and **xenophobic**.

The bulk of Wilson’s book focused on insects and other nonhuman animal species. In the final chapter, however, he speculated on how sociobiology might account for at least some of the behaviour of *Homo sapiens*. Later, he and other sociobiologists refined these speculations and developed a scaled-down, modified version of “human sociobiology.” Human sociobiology, featured in Wilson’s book *On Human Nature* (1994), provoked a storm of opposition in anthropology, where culture was held to be vastly more important than biology as the determinant of behavioural differences. Cultural anthropologists as otherwise divergent as cultural materialist Marvin Harris, in *Cultural Materialism* (1979), and structuralist Marshall Sahlins, in *The Use and Abuse of Biology* (1976), united to criticize human sociobiology as erroneous and irrelevant and to condemn it as an ideology of disguised Social Darwinism. This staunch judgement was the opinion of the majority of cultural anthropologists. At the same time, a small minority came to adopt the sociobiological perspective, notably ethnographer Napoleon Chagnon (b. 1938), who used it to explain the outcome of matings among South American Yanomamo Indians. In primatology, sociobiology, in one form or another, became a dominant research strategy. A milestone in this regard was *The Langurs of Abu* (1977), a book in which primatologist Sarah Blaffer Hrdy (b. 1946) explained how new langur monkey “alpha males” killed the infants of displaced alpha males in order to make the infants’ mothers sexually receptive, and then impregnated the mothers in order to propagate their own genes. Sociobiology still pervades primatology, often identifiable under the more recent rubric of **evolutionary psychology**, a popular topic of discussion among media pundits and an equally popular target of criticism by public anthropologists.

Symbolic and Interpretive Anthropology

Key Words: cargo cults, hermeneutics, revitalization movement

Paralleling developments in self-consciously nomothetic, materialist, ecological, and bio-behavioural anthropology in the latter half of the twentieth century was a new concern: understanding the systematic character of cultural meaning. In Britain, the ascendancy of social analysis rooted in Durkheimian structuralism and structural-functionalism had long since begun to show signs of strain. For many anthropologists, including Leach, Gluckman, and their students, the static nature of structural analysis seemed increasingly a fatal flaw, as did an overall lack of focus on the flexible character of social and cultural meaning and its central role in social and political change cross-culturally. One influential answer derived from a new body of research that came to be called symbolic anthropology.

Meanwhile, for a new generation of American anthropologists coming of age in the 1960s in particular, the Boasian-inspired frameworks bequeathed to them by the culture and personality and cognitive schools were inadequate for at least two pivotal reasons. First, they were perceived as being ethnocentrically biased on a number of levels, especially with respect to the supposedly universal importance of the individual psyche; and second, because both bodies of theory were in fact quite schematically rigid, neither was sufficiently able to address the increasingly important theoretical problem of social and cultural change. In the United States, this concern surfaced with, among other influences, the rediscovery of the theories of Max Weber, particularly by the theoretical school that would be known as interpretive anthropology.

The rediscovery of Max Weber both reflected and stimulated a new concern for the importance of meaning and the human potential to act creatively in the world. While this had arguably been a concern of cultural anthropologists all along, the essential premise of structuralist theory (in its various guises) was that culture constrained, or controlled, people more than it served, or enabled, them. It was as if people were simply the vehicles for social and psychological structures and not the other way around. This dominion of structures was unacceptable to a growing number of anthropologists, and yet, in the United States, the “obvious” second option—

historical particularism in the Boasian tradition—remained equally unpalatable, mainly for its narrowness of focus and its relative lack of theory. An emerging consensus was that ways had to be found to explain society and culture without appealing to minutely controlling social structures or to inaccessible psychological ones. In the 1960s and 1970s, this fresh interest in exploring meaning was expressed in the language of symbols and interpretation.

One of the earliest to adapt Weber's thought to explicitly anthropological analysis was Anthony F.C. Wallace (1923–2015). In his influential historical ethnography about the Iroquois, *The Death and Rebirth of the Seneca* (1972), Wallace applied his concept of the **revitalization movement**, which was more fully formulated in his theoretical revitalization work *Religion: An Anthropological View* (1966). In both, the author drew heavily on Weber's idea that during periods of cultural dissonance or crisis, it is the charismatic prophet who rationalizes a new and more satisfying religious world view for the members of a society. A second now-classic Weberian study was *The Trumpet Shall Sound* (1968) by Peter Worsley (1924–2013), which describes how many native peoples of Indonesia and New Guinea are led by a variety of charismatic prophets in a series of millennial "**cargo cults**." Worsley's and Wallace's studies were strikingly similar in that both sociocultural contexts examined were ones in which colonial powers placed severe economic, political, and cultural stress on the colonized, generating a "breakdown" in the indigenous social order. In both settings, the revitalizing social movements rationalized the impact of colonialism into world views that stipulated the omnipotence of a supernatural power or agent who would ultimately restore harmony and happiness if specific ethical and behavioural criteria were adhered to.

Wallace's and Worsley's analyses highlighted the socially transformative potential of human agency. They incorporated Weber's synthesis of materialism and idealism, which to some anthropologists seemed more useful than Marx's theory, often viewed as reducing culture to a reflex of material conditions. This particular Weberian theme became conspicuous in the writings of later postmodern anthropologists, for whom cultural **hermeneutics** and relations of political and economic power loomed large.

In addition, the roots of what came to be called symbolic anthropology in Britain and interpretive anthropology in the United States can be traced back, at least indirectly, to the neo-Kantian philosophy of Wilhelm Dilthey (1833–

1911) and others, who helped formulate the distinction between the natural sciences, or *Naturwissenschaften*, and social sciences, or *Geisteswissenschaften*. According to this distinction, promulgated by Franz Boas, the natural sciences deal with entities amenable to generalizations, while the social sciences deal with “mental” entities unique to individuals and groups. To this distinction phenomenologist-philosopher Edmund Husserl (1854–1938) added the observation that natural science is unsuitable for the study of cultural life because cultural life has meaning, which is best understood subjectively as “lived experience.”

Husserl’s assertions notwithstanding, it would, finally, be difficult to argue that symbolic and interpretive anthropologists were inspired by anything less than a desire to do sound empirical research in the best anthropological tradition. What differentiated symbolic and interpretive anthropologists from their colleagues working in explicitly materialist or ecological traditions was their relentless insistence that human societies are distinctive because of their capacity for culture and that social and cultural life is held together by interpenetrating networks of symbols, each of which is a carrier of cultural meaning. This much, at least, the symbolists and interpretivists had in common. In spite of this underlying similarity, it must be kept in mind that even from the outset, clear differences existed between the two schools, and that these differences both derived from, and had a deep impact on, the respective characters of British and American research.

Victor Turner and Symbolic Anthropology

Key Words: anti-structure, *communitas*, dominant symbol, instrumental symbols, liminal, multivocal, ritual process, symbolic anthropology

In Britain, the most influential and academically respected symbolic anthropologist was Victor Turner (1920–83). Turner was born in Glasgow, Scotland, and developed an early interest in poetry and classics. After serving in World War II, he turned his attention to anthropology. A student of Max Gluckman, Turner was, like most British anthropologists of his generation, heavily influenced by Émile Durkheim’s dictum that social cohesion was achieved “organically” through the interpenetration of a given society’s component parts. Like Gluckman, Turner was concerned to expose the political character of social relations, with the general goal of accounting for

social coherence, even in contexts where many interpersonal conflicts seemingly threatened to tear a community apart. Fieldwork among the Ndembu of Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia) convinced him of the centrality of ritual, in particular, to the maintenance of social order. This insight garnered the young anthropologist much respect when his findings were published in one of the most important monographs of late structural-functionalism, *Schism and Continuity in an African Society* (1957).

Turner's early perspective on the importance of ritual informed much of his later work and shaped the direction of his theoretical interests. Throughout the 1960s, he continued to move still further away from the previous generation of structural-functionalists, for many members of which the essence of organic solidarity lay in the concrete institutions and formalized relations of society. Instead, Turner focused on the Durkheimian idea that social solidarity is a function of the systems of symbolic logic that connect people. In this way, his **symbolic anthropology** had much in common with Lévi-Strauss's structuralism, similarly inspired by Durkheim. Unlike his French peers (indeed, unlike Durkheim himself), for whom symbolic contrasts and correspondences were seen as a universal mental template on which all culture is built, Turner's main innovations in anthropology derived from his view that social unity is basically *problematic* and should not be taken for granted. Whereas Durkheim believed that primitive humankind came together out of some primordial psychological need for togetherness, Turner argued that people are essentially forced to repeatedly construct social life against those forces in the natural world that constantly threaten to destroy it. Because symbols are the primary vehicles whereby this solidarity is organized, they are instruments, or "tools," employed by people to achieve a particular end—the reproduction of social order.

Again drawing on his work among the Ndembu, Turner explored ways in which various objects and actions of ritual are deployed as complex **instrumental symbols** that are the "means to the ends" of any given ritual, such as rootlets from fruit-bearing trees wielded in the context of ritual with the explicit purpose of enhancing female fertility. At a broader level, another set of symbols, which Turner dubbed "dominant," possessed a role that he considered to be both **multivocal** and ubiquitous, being present in any number of ritual events and being used for a variety of meanings, some of which might represent conflicting interests in the Ndembu community.

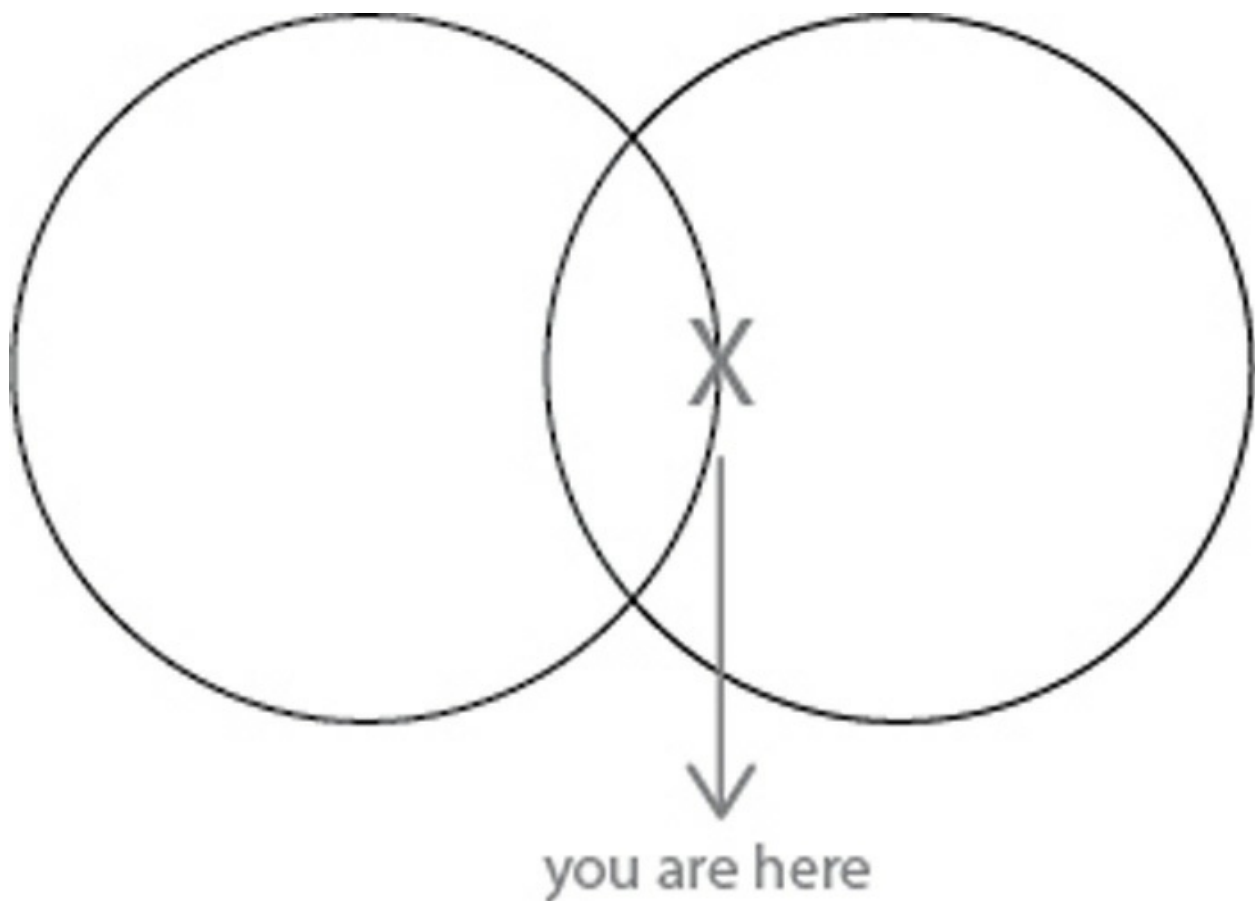


FIGURE 3.3 Liminality: This drawing illustrates Victor Turner's sense of the term as "betwixt and between."

Among the many examples Turner explored ethnographically, one that is frequently cited concerns the Ndembu *mudyi* tree, a **dominant symbol** *par excellence*. Turner viewed the *mudyi* tree, which contains a white latex, as the equivalent of a national flag among the Ndembu—a symbol that might, depending on the ritual context, evoke milk, the kin bonds between mothers and children, and the continuity of Ndembu kinship from one generation to the next. Less harmoniously, Turner deciphered the *Nkang'a*, or girl's puberty ritual, to be an occasion in which Ndembu women's mobilization about the *mudyi* tree symbolized the opposition of females to males, thus revealing the conflicted, rather than consensual, character of the Ndembu social order. For Turner, this was evidence that Ndembu social integration and coherence had to be *forcibly* maintained in light of these and other self-destructive tendencies. He argued that symbolism was the key to

understanding this process, because of the dominant symbol's capacity to "stand for unity and continuity in the widest Ndembu society, embracing its contradictions." Much of Turner's theoretical exposition of symbols and symbolic performance was published in a widely read collection of ethnographic essays, *The Forest of Symbols* (1967).

Beyond this extension of Durkheimian theory, Turner is also credited with breathing fresh life into the ideas of Arnold van Gennep (1873–1957), who, much earlier in the twentieth century, had speculated about the "**ritual process**." In his work *The Rites of Passage* (1959), van Gennep argued that ritual involves the passage of individuals from one social state to another and that this entailed three stages: "separation" from the group, "transition" to a new state, and "incorporation" (more properly thought of as "re-incorporation") within the social order.

Intrigued by his predecessor's insights, Turner elaborated his still largely Durkheimian concept of ritual, in which the coming together of individuals involves the performance of solidarity, to include a theory of process largely modelled on van Gennep's concept of "liminality." Turner believed that rituals generate a **liminal** period in which all notions of social "structure" are undone through the physical and symbolic separation of certain individuals from society. In being marked, or set apart, as special, these individuals cease for a period of time to occupy a certain position within the social order and, in effect, are for that period considered both "outside" society and in some cases even a danger to it.

This temporary negation of social structure Turner named "**anti-structure**." In many instances, anti-structure and liminality might be observed with respect to particular individuals undergoing transitional "rites" in which they pass from one life stage to another. Examples of such events might include coronation ceremonies, death rituals, or the ubiquitous rites of transition from boyhood to manhood and girlhood to womanhood. On a larger scale, anti-structure is more familiar to many in, for instance, the guise of carnival: an event at which the ritualized chaos of anti-structure involves inverting "normal" identities and roles, so that men are ritually transformed into women and women into men, kings into servants and servants into kings, old into young and young into old, and so on.

Anti-structure is possible, Turner argued, because the liminal state is one in which all the limitations of everyday structure are dispensed with and new

creative possibilities opened up. A central aspect of this theory is that, throughout all inversion and liminal transformation of norms and identities, members of a society ultimately come to recognize and reaffirm the basic structural cohesion that they had known all along in their routine existence outside of ritual. It is by way of this new-found solidarity, or reintegration, that society avoids the truly revolutionary implications of liminality and is instead fused by what Turner called *com munitas*—an increased awareness of the social order, reminiscent of Durkheim’s idea that rituals are emotionally effervescent events.

Clifford Geertz and Interpretive Anthropology

Key Words: interpretive anthropology, semiotic, text, thick description

In the United States, meanwhile, a new generation of avowedly cultural anthropologists was busily developing its own **semiotic**, or cognition-focused, perspective, which also depended on the social circulation and ritual performance of symbols. The two central players in this evolving Americanist approach were David Schneider (1918–95) and, especially, the founder of **interpretive anthropology**, Clifford Geertz (1926–2006).

Geertz studied philosophy as an undergraduate at Antioch College, and then, following service in World War II, enrolled as a graduate student in the Department of Social Relations at Harvard. The department was famously interdisciplinary, and, while there, Geertz studied under sociologist Talcott Parsons as well as Boasian anthropologist Clyde Kluckhohn. After graduation, he held various academic appointments before joining the Institute for Advanced Studies at Princeton, the institution with which he is most closely associated.

Whereas Turner derived his core insights from Durkheim, Geertz’s intellectual lineage originates with Max Weber, whose emphasis on meaning, as opposed to structure, gave Geertz’s work a very different orientation from that of his British counterpart. Taking his cue from Boasian anthropologist Clyde Kluckhohn, Geertz incorporated into this theory the idea that at the core of culture is a set of integrated moral values that preserve the correspondence of the world “as it is” with the world “as it should be.” More specifically, this prototypical interpretive anthropologist set out to show how lived experience is integrated in a coherent public system of symbols that

both renders the world intelligible and seems uniquely suited to do so. For Geertz, this epistemology was deeply grounded in the assumption that “man is an animal suspended in webs of significance that he himself has spun” and that the study of culture is not, therefore, an “experimental science in search of law” but rather “an interpretive one in search of meaning.” The meaning Geertz set about describing in his prolific career is not locked inside the discrete psychologies of individuals, however, but in a network of significations that are on public display.

In his enormously influential book *The Interpretation of Cultures* (1973), Geertz set out his own vision of the ethnographic method, the centrepiece of which was a research technique called “**thick description**.” Geertz prescribed this method as the most effective tool in the ethnographer’s tool kit for teasing out the “**text**” of culture, that is, the fine details of human life that make behaviour intelligible. “Doing ethnography,” he wrote, was like “trying to read ... a manuscript.” Geertz held this method to be particularly effective in unravelling the various layers, or “webs,” of meaning performed by participants in ritual.

In a famous example that formed the focus of one of the best-known essays in *The Interpretation of Cultures*, Geertz analyzed the “Balinese cockfight” from an interpretive perspective. The significance of the event, he argued, was in its power to convey multiple messages about the cultural “ethos” in which participants lived—a social environment characterized by status competition between individuals sorted into hierarchical, gendered rankings. Tongue deeply in cheek, Geertz offered that men of locally high rank competed with one another by proxy through their “cocks” (i.e., roosters), which fought to the death in primal blood-sport. He hypothesized that when such rivalry occurred between individuals of near or equal ranking, the performative force of the ritual could be said to be emotionally “deep” for onlookers; that is, such rituals were of great social force in imparting a sense of the meaning of social relations. For Geertz, such relations constituted an important theme of the Balinese social order, which, because they lurked just below the level of awareness, had to be symbolically performed in order to have public force. In sum, the cockfight was a symbolic microcosm, or text, of Balinese society, collectively shared by all witnesses to the event. The ritual was, in short, a “story they [the Balinese] tell themselves about themselves.”

In the twenty-first century, following the rise of postmodernism,

interpretive anthropology seems increasingly anachronistic. Nevertheless, Geertz remains iconic among American anthropologists and is still revered by many for infusing the discipline with a heavy dose of much-needed Weberian corrective to earlier ethnocentric approaches. A prolific writer, Geertz also remains highly respected for his extensive fieldwork in, and ethnographic portraits of, Java, Bali, and Morocco. In short, he was possibly the single most influential American anthropologist of the late twentieth century.



FIGURE 3.4 Turtles All the Way Down: As recounted by Clifford Geertz (1926–

2006), a story goes like this:

“There is an Indian story . . . about an Englishman who, having been told that the world rested on a platform which rested on the back of an elephant which in turn rested on the back of a turtle, asked . . . what did the turtle rest on? Another turtle? And that turtle?”

“Ah, Sahib, after that it is turtles all the way down.”

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Post-processual Archaeology

Key Words: contextual, critical anthropologists, landscape archaeology, post-processual archaeology

In the subdiscipline of anthropological archaeology, the interpretive perspective was to find favour as well, especially among those disenchanted with the “excesses” of Lewis Binford’s avowedly scientific approach to archaeology. Many archaeologists had been uncomfortable with the so-called New Archaeology and its adherence to key canons of Cartesian rationalism and objectivity. For them, archaeology was allied to history more closely than to science, and, because history was a humanity, the holistic explanations of Boasian particularism seemed more appropriate than the covering-law model and “economic determinism” of Binford. Some of these archaeologists embraced the viewpoint of **critical anthropologists** that science is elitist and those of French structuralists and structural Marxists that material culture has a symbolic dimension, consciousness causes change, and artifacts reflect social relations as well as adaptation to environments.

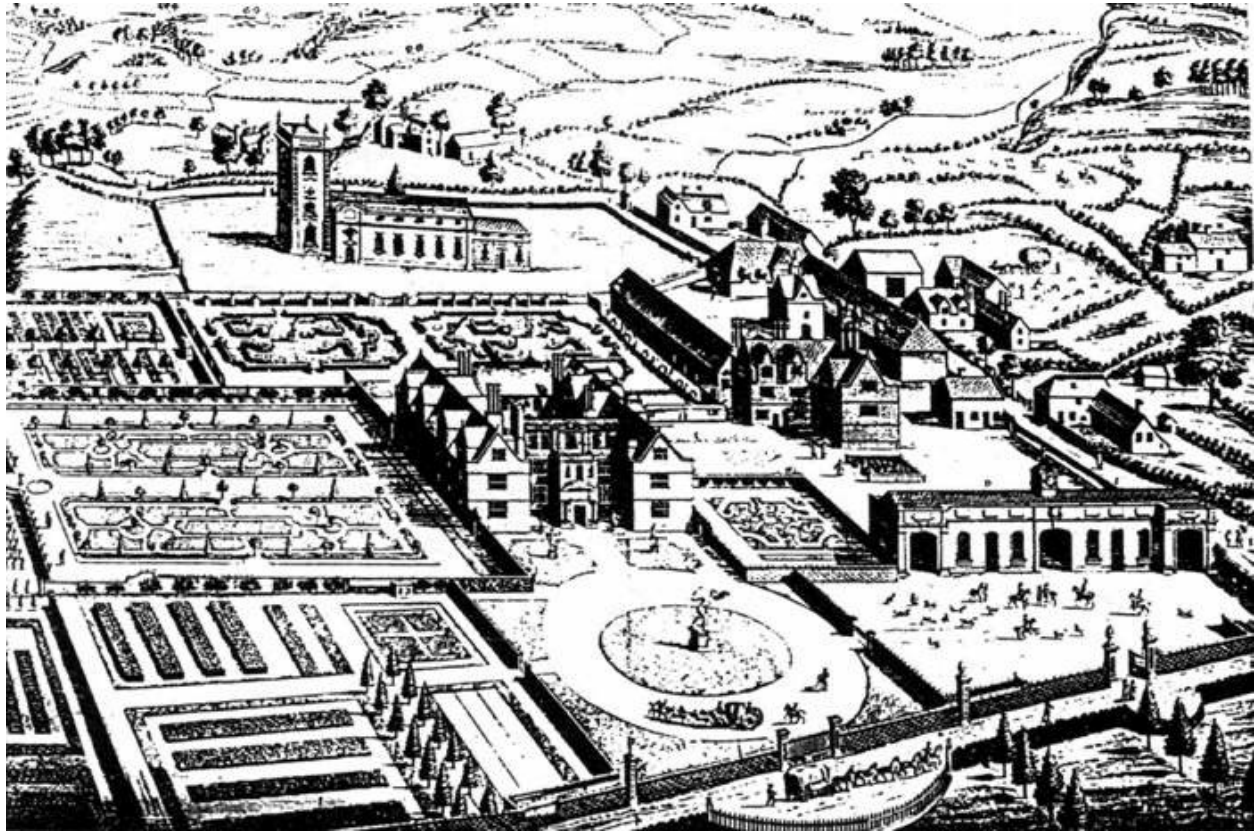
In the 1980s, British archaeologist Ian Hodder (b. 1948) codified these views into what he called **contextual**, or “**post-processual archaeology**”. This new perspective spread with the publication of Hodder’s several influential books, notably *Symbolism in Action: Ethnoarchaeological Studies of Material Culture* (1982) and *Reading the Past: Current Approaches to Interpretation in Archaeology* (1986). Echoing the influential French historian Michel Foucault, “contextual” refers to Hodder’s view that artifacts are embedded in a web of cultural “discourse” that affirms social relations

and enhances the power of privileged groups. “Post-processual” referred to his view that the quest to discover law-like processes of culture change, characteristic of the New Archaeology, should be abandoned. A latter-day version of post-processual archaeology is **landscape archaeology**, in which the spatial distribution of artifacts and features is rendered a cultural landscape that both incorporates and modifies meaningful elements of nature. Like symbolists and postmodernists in anthropology, post-processualists in archaeology largely abandoned pure positivist scientific objectivity as an unattainable and undesirable theoretical goal. In so doing, they unsettled the profession and helped pave the way for a new wave of culturally sensitive critiques. Resulting from this development have been new and imaginative ways of integrating archaeology with cultural anthropology.

The Influence of Symbolic and Interpretive Approaches

From the 1960s into the 1980s, symbolic and interpretive approaches both expressed and nurtured a growing apprehension within the discipline, namely, that those claims to authoritative knowledge that anthropologists had previously taken for granted were at best tenuous—at least in the cynical environment of the late-twentieth-century academy. It is, therefore, ironic that the same cynicism that cultivated the particularistic, neo-Kantian tendencies in that period also gave rise in the mid-1970s to political economy, a perspective that opposes symbolic and interpretive anthropology in its renewed emphasis on history and objectivity. This was not to be the “old” structuralism of classical British and French approaches but a new body of thought heavily inspired by the historicism of Marx and Engels. Cultures, the new anthropological political economists argued, were not local and internally undifferentiated. Rather, they were translocal phenomena, shaped and directed by unequal access to power and material resources. The central problem with symbolic approaches was not that they laid such emphasis on meaning but that their claims to be doing away with the notion of “structure” were spurious. In fact, anthropological political economists insisted, they were busily constructing a new structural orthodoxy in which individual agency still had no real place and in which social change could not really be accommodated.

FIGURE 3.5 Formal Gardens at Castle Bromwich Hall, West Midlands, England: A contextual interpretation of this eighteenth-century archaeological site is that formal gardens make statements about socially accessible and inaccessible space.



From *Meaningful Architecture: Social Interpretations of Buildings*. London: Ashgate Publishing. Copyright © 1994 by Martin Locock. Reprinted by permission of Martin Locock.

Whereas both symbolic and interpretive perspectives were essentially Cartesian, at least to the extent that they continued to assume a theoretical distinction between the observer and the observed, the postmodern “turn” of the 1980s and 1990s sought to do away even with this distinction. Nevertheless, a reasonable argument can be made that the postmodern paradigm so popular with a recent generation of anthropologists has its most immediate anthropological antecedent in those analyses of symbols and meaning pioneered by Turner, Geertz, and Hodder.

Transactionalism

Key Words: symbolic interactionism, transactionalism

The transactionalist perspective within anthropology represented an attempt to overcome the limitations of traditional structural-functionalism by revisiting the notion of the individual as the basic unit of social life, a notion that had featured prominently in the work of Malinowski but that was largely eclipsed by Radcliffe-Brown's vision of Durkheimian social structure. Also frequently referred to as "methodological individualism," it shared much common ground with **symbolic interactionism**, a counterpart school in sociology established by Talcott Parsons (1902–79). **Transactionalism** was characterized by a sharp focus on the decision-making strategies adopted by individuals living in particular political "arenas." The perspective enjoyed a degree of success between the late 1950s and 1970s, largely as a result of the influence of Norwegian anthropologist Fredrik Barth. Other important figures within the transactionalist school included British anthropologist George Bailey (b. 1924) and British-Canadian anthropologist Robert Paine (1926–2010).

Fredrik Barth

A one-time student of Raymond Firth and Edmund Leach, and for more than two decades holding academic appointments in the United States, Fredrik Barth (1928–2016) was widely respected for his fieldwork conducted in Pakistan, which produced the influential ethnography *Political Leadership among Swat Pathans* (1959). Barth's best-known theoretical exposition, and the one in which the key tenets of transactionalism are discussed in the greatest detail, is *Models of Social Organization* (1966).

Reflecting the thought of philosopher Karl Popper (1902–94), who considered the individual social agent or actor the "linchpin" in the creation and maintenance of social relationships, a Barthian perspective holds that social life is, at base, a complex series of economic transactions between individual social actors, all of whom share the same goal of maximizing their interests or gain through the strategic choices they make. In this view, structured systems of norms and values are created and sustained through the

economic interests of individuals. For this reason, social structure should be considered for its emergent rather than fixed nature. Social relationships are “generated,” sustained, and changed as a result of the economic choices made by individuals, each of whom has learned to play and manipulate the “rules” of a social “game.” Perhaps the most important implication of this line of reasoning is that individuals, rather than social systems or cultures, should be looked to as the engines of social continuity and change. Among the Swat Pathans, for instance, Barth argued that the social structure was subject to manipulation by leaders and clients, each of whom worked to realize their own self-interest.

Like those political-, conflict-, and urban-oriented approaches championed by Gluckman and, later, by anthropological political economists, transactional theory proved especially appealing for its apparent transcendence of a key dilemma posed by structural-functional analysis: that individuals are caught in and defined by the social and cultural structures in which they are, in a sense, “imprisoned.” Where, in this form of analysis, was room to be found for social and cultural change? Certainly by the 1950s, many British social anthropologists were searching for ways to move beyond what were increasingly seen as, at best, the partial truths of classical Radcliffe-Brownian structural-functionalism. While transactionalism seemed for a time to hold out the promise of a new paradigm for social relations, practitioners of this form of analysis have also been taken to task for assuming, rather than providing evidence for, the rational, economically driven character of human social activity. Several questions were frequently raised. First, was the nature of social and cultural structure really determined by the calculating, voluntary, decision-making processes of individuals? And, second, were these notions about the rational and the cognitive not themselves Western in origin? Furthermore, in light of the historical conditions and regimes in and under which different peoples have lived and died, were individuals really always “free” to make choices that maximized their social or economic gain?

Calling these latent assumptions of transactionalism into doubt meant that, in spite of its laudable attempts to draw concern for the individual into orthodox British structural-functionalism, Barthian theory was ironically subject to much of the same criticism as other forms of structural anthropology, namely, that the individuals of transactional analysis were hardly more creative than those of structural-functionalism because the

theory depended on a particularly narrow, prepolitical, overly rational, unhistorical perspective of how individuals act vis-à-vis one another. Nevertheless, the preoccupation of the transactionalist approach with the individual cultural agent deepened the concern for understanding social and cultural change within anthropology and in so doing hastened an emerging crisis over the nature of social integration and structure.

Anthropology and Gender

Key Words: emergent, gender

Among the most vibrant areas of anthropological research over the past several decades have been those focused on **gender** and sexuality. As with so many areas of anthropological interest (from religion to family life), current approaches in this domain of research have their origins very early in the professional discipline. From the mid-nineteenth century, an insatiable Eurocentric fascination with the “primitives” and “savages” went hand-in-hand with an abiding curiosity about the way in which men and women were imagined in such non-Western contexts.

Most especially, ethnocentric speculation stoked a vicarious interest in the sexual practices of these people—with assumptions about unchecked debauchery and “primitive promiscuity” all but taken for granted. Even among respected anthropologists and the publishers of ethnographic monographs, such damaging clichés were tolerated (and occasionally indulged) in order to preserve public interest in the lifeways of others. Perhaps the most famous examples of such mixed motives (if we may call them that) involve the towering figures of Bronislaw Malinowski and Margaret Mead. Arguably, both Malinowski’s *The Sexual Life of Savages in North-Western Melanesia* (1929) and, especially, Mead’s *Coming of Age in Samoa* (1928) represent the twilight of this colonial-era pattern. Though these books have been the focus of controversy for various reasons, both have also been acclaimed for their richly textured portraits of non-Western sexual convention. Still, ethnographers through the middle years of the twentieth century grew ever more reluctant to titillate readers and romanticize the “natives.”

Returning to the terms “gender” and “sexuality,” each of these has to some degree emerged as a distinct domain of analysis. However, pairing them together here is appropriate given the deeply entangled connections between various gendered identities and sexualities. Further, while the investigation of gender grew out of feminist studies, activism, and a growing concern to problematize and historicize cultural meaning, the advent of interest in masculinities and transgender experience among (especially) cultural anthropologists has provoked recognition that such identities are

emergent aspects of the human experience and consciousness, rather than givens of nature. Not surprisingly, such insights have spawned new subsets of research interest across the discipline. In this section, we review some of the key aspects of these developments.

Feminism and Its Effects

Key Words: androcentrism, anthropological feminism, berdache, bio-logic, body-reasoning, deconstructionism, feminist anthropology, patriarchy, Third Gender, transgender, Two Spirit

In anthropology, the current discussion of gender and sexuality was erected on an earlier foundation of feminism. The rise of a self-consciously **feminist anthropology**, or, for some, **anthropological feminism**, can be attributed to the advent of new, progressive, or “radicalized” political and social agendas in the 1960s and 1970s, both in and outside academia, and to the disciplinary introspection that had begun to plague (or liberate, depending on one’s point of view) anthropology entering the final decades of the twentieth century. As the qualifying adjective suggests, *feminist* anthropologists have argued that a more powerful and inclusive understanding of society and culture can be achieved only by studying the cultural representations and experiences of, and practices associated with, women.

From the outset, this emerging body of theory and research was intended to bear little resemblance to previous generations of structuralism and structural-functionalism, for two reasons. First, the goals of an efflorescing “anthropology of women” were to be emancipatory: feminist anthropology was unabashedly partisan, in that practitioners actively sought redress for imbalances created and sustained by an unjust social order—at home and abroad—that accorded men and women different status and privilege. Second, a distinctive feature of early feminist scholarship in anthropology was that it attempted to expose the sins of a discipline scarred by a legacy of **androcentrism** with respect to both the identity and the interests of its core practitioners. At issue was a troubling fact of much ethnographic research: notwithstanding important contributions made by Margaret Mead, Ruth Benedict, and others to advancing a women-oriented perspective, it was clear that most fieldwork and writing in American, French, and British anthropology had to that point been conducted by Western men, who

undoubtedly brought with them to their various fieldsites all the gender biases and assumptions inherent in their own societies. In practical terms, one consequence was that these male ethnographers were far more likely to have access to male-dominated institutions and practices than they were to those associated with women, a fact that almost inevitably skewed their research focus and emphasis in favour of such cultural institutions as war, politics, economics, and religion. This focus and emphasis, feminist anthropologists argued, had formed a nucleus of research priorities to the exclusion of childrearing, domestic life, and other spheres of social and cultural life dominated by women in many non-Western societies. In such works as Michelle Rosaldo and Louise Lamphere's *Women, Culture, and Society* (1974) and Rayna Reiter's *Toward an Anthropology of Women* (1975), feminist anthropologists wondered aloud how a holistic and inclusive anthropological perspective could be hoped for under these conditions.

The most widespread solution advanced during the 1960s and 1970s bore a resemblance to the salvage ethnography of decades past, in that a new generation of feminist researchers (the overwhelming majority of whom were female) was encouraged to investigate those women-centred practices and institutions that had until that time been neglected by their male counterparts. In so doing, they hoped that their efforts would redress what they considered to be a gross imbalance in research foci. However sanguine, this ambition to "level the playing field" between the anthropological study of men and women, so eagerly embraced by a first generation of feminist thinkers, seems in hindsight rather awkward or even naïve. One effect of the postmodern turn of the 1980s was to cast doubt on the possibility of objective renderings of all social categories—including those implied by the terms "men" and "women." As the field developed, a universal application of the thesis that women were everywhere subordinate to men was coming under increasing criticism from feminists in the non-Euro-American world, for whom such assumptions both sidestepped the issue of very real differences between women of different ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds and obscured the fact that relations between men and women in the non-Western world could be (and often were) very different from those assumed by Western feminists, with their largely unquestioned ideas about global **patriarchy** and the subordination of women to men.





FIGURE 3.6 American Anthropological Association (AAA) Presidents: (clockwise) Margaret Clark (1982), Yolanda Moses (1995–97), Louise Lamphere (1999–2001), and Virginia Dominguez (2009–11). Since 1980, two-thirds of the presidents of the AAA have been women.

“Margaret Clark,” “Yolanda Moses,” “Virginia Dominguez.” Reproduced by permission of the American Anthropological Association. Not for sale or further reproduction; “Louise Lamphere” Photograph by Blackstone Studios, New York.

At a broader level, another important product of the disciplinary introspection that took anthropology by storm in the 1980s was a willingness, even eagerness, to examine with new eyes the guiding premises of anthropology. Although this was universally hailed as a significant development within the discipline, at least some were uncomfortable with the easy assimilation of a new branch of scholarship within the accepted canon. Marilyn Strathern, for instance, has written of her dismay at recognizing feminism as subject to a tendency within sociocultural anthropology to fetishize eclecticism while simultaneously rejecting it. That is, while by the 1980s the normative state of anthropological science involved trumpeting diversity and relativism as key virtues of anthropology, a significant irony of this truism was that this same concern for diversity was subject to an underlying drive toward *integration*. As new perspectives emerged, those deemed to be of enduring value by some segment of the scholarly community were grafted to the existing corpus of theory, igniting it like so many neglected campfires, individually insignificant but merging under the right conditions in conflagration. Indeed, this assumption continues to prevail in introductory texts that wed, however imperfectly, four internally diverse subfields into a “functioning” machine or organism. For Strathern, it has been important to draw a sharp distinction between what feminism can contribute and has contributed to the anthropological body—a splinter field that has been dubbed “feminist anthropology”—and a critical and provocative area of scholarship she refers to as “anthropological feminism.” Contrasting a watered-down feminism/anthropology hybrid, anthropological feminism preserves its autonomy and refusal to be obscured through absorption. That this has occurred constitutes nothing less, in her view, than violence done to the integrity of feminism’s core ethic: a commitment to viewing social life as riven with hierarchical relations of domination and inequity. In this way, the vision of smooth integration and holism, although doubtless comforting and encouraging for the many champions of a unified anthropology, seems almost utopian.

Strathern’s perspective has to varying degrees been shared by many anthropologists working within a feminist perspective. Oyèrónké Oyewùmí, for instance, examines sex and gender in Yoruban society from the perspective of **de constructionism**, refusing to accept the “ground rules” of Western scholarship in which the social world reflects underlying biological realities. In her analysis, this form of determinism, “**bio-logic**” or “**body-**

reasoning” as she calls it (an elaboration of ideas pioneered by Michel Foucault, whose work will be discussed below), distorts the capacity of native Africans to produce and manage categories of knowledge that diverge from what is taken for granted in colonially imposed and, by definition, universalizing scientific discourse. This privileging of biology impairs the development of a more sophisticated, nuanced feminist anthropology insofar as the physical body and the social meanings accruing to it have been collapsed. By way of example, she points to the non-existence of gender as a category of social distinction in pre-colonial Yoruban society. Instead of social rank tied to anatomical features, she argues that Yoruban hierarchy is based on “a different kind of map”: seniority as a function of relative age. Even more problematic for bio-centric science is the fluidity with which hierarchy appears to have been managed in pre-colonial Africa. Social statuses are not fixed or immutable, as is assumed in bio-logic, but flexible and situational, permitting those constructed as fundamentally “different” to be fundamentally “the same” if warranted by a given situation or context. In this case, there is no need for conditional identification, such as that made in Anglo-American society when occupational categories are qualified according to gender, as in “female soldier” and “male nurse.”

Oyewùmí’s study, published in the 1990s, points to another critical insight of 1980s anthropology—one that has enduring value for postmodern and post-structural theorists: that gender identities are not natural phenomena to be assumed a priori but rather are highly variable and fluid social processes to be observed in use and context. For the purposes of cross-cultural analysis, in the 1980s it was argued persuasively that anthropologists should be careful to draw a distinction between sex and gender. Sex, it was observed, refers solely to empirically verifiable, universal, biological differences between males and females. In contrast, and as ethnographic research continued to confirm, gender is always and everywhere the product of distinctive cultural and historical contexts. Although these terms have frequently been conflated in the history of Western society (and elsewhere), resulting in the development of many unquestioned assumptions about the “natural” characters and propensities of men and women, a point of consensus among postmodern feminists (and among most anthropologists who accept their insights) has been that the vast majority of allegedly fundamental differences between males and females—and all that such differences mean for gendered identity, behaviour, division of labour, and ideas about nature—are in fact

cultural constructs that are highly variable.

Reflecting this general agreement that there is no universally binding set of characteristics, roles, or practices that set human males apart from human females, a comparative and historical anthropology continues to be seen by the broader feminist movement as an important vehicle for the study of the many cultural processes informing the social organization of ideas and practices related to gender and sexuality. While any short list of leading figures in this diffuse stream of scholarship that resists labelling must, perforce, seem rather arbitrary, a few names do stand out. Besides Marilyn Strathern (b. 1941), among the most widely read are Lila Abu-Lughod (b. 1952), Judith Butler (b. 1956), Louise Lamphere (b. 1940), Micaela di Leonardo (b. 1949), Henrietta Moore (b. 1957), Sherry Ortner (b. 1941), Rayna [Reiter] Rapp, and Michelle Rosaldo (1944–81).

Before moving on to discussion of anthropological interest in sexualities, it is important to note the significance of a change that has emerged in how this general domain of interest has been construed. Over the last two decades especially, the political priorities of women's studies of feminist emancipation have been leavened with a theoretical concern for generating a more expansive, inclusive field of scholarship: one that would elide any lingering implication that a focus on the feminine per se "biologized" gendered difference. At the same time, new awareness and interest in other forms of gendered identity, in particular masculinities and transgender experiences, have led to flourishing areas of research, both within anthropology and in the expanding world of interdisciplinary studies.

In recent years, ethnographers and historians have explored the concept of **Third Gender** in a variety of societies. Most frequently referred to as "**Two Spirit**" persons (and formerly referred to as *berdache*), transgender individuals feature in historical accounts of many Western and Great Plains Native American societies, and exemplify the shifting, blurry boundaries between cultural constructions of masculinity and femininity. Within the Two Spirit category, anatomical males expressed conventions of female dress and social roles, but not necessarily sexuality (anatomical females adopting male social roles have also been documented, though less frequently). This category of persons, indeterminate by the standards of a rigid Western gender binary, may be said to embody the "two spirits" of males and females. Similar Third-Gender categories are associated with the Indian *Hijra* and Thai *Kathoeys*—again, these persons are mainly anatomically male but live

their lives as women (while generally regarding themselves as neither men nor women). Anthropological research among these and other **transgender** communities has provoked deep questioning of normative assumptions concerning two genders that mirror two sexes as the natural products of human evolution.

Just as significantly, what have until recent years been the unmarked categories of “men” and “masculinities” are now the focus of vibrant research and debate. A pioneer researcher in this field, R.W. Connell (b. 1944) argues that the category of masculinity must be problematized if anthropologists and others are ever to undo destructive, ahistorical assumptions about an innate, essential masculinity that mirrors “traditional” ideas about the feminine in Western culture. She observes that since only a sliver of humanity (a scant 5 per cent) embraces this reified vision of Western male and female gender attributes and roles, this “startling ethnocentrism” can hardly be taken at face value. Only fine-grained ethnographic and historical analyses, Connell argues, can destabilize these inherently inaccurate presumptions. The “cure” she prescribes is sustained pursuit of “local constructions of the masculine” that will help to denaturalize “masculinity” as a reified object, replacing it with a better understanding of how men constitute themselves as a distinct gender in relation to women. In particular, the institutional contexts of these places and practices (especially with respect to the power inflections of the state, workplace, and family) are defining features of what masculinity “is,” rather than mere background. The masculine, in other words, is the historical product of a complex intermingling of institutions and power, external to which it ceases to have meaning as an aspect of cultural being; one cannot, Connell says, “be masculine in a particular way ... without affecting the conditions in which that form of masculinity arose: whether to reproduce them, intensify them, or subvert them.”

Culture and Sexualities

Key Words: LGBT, repressive hypothesis, Stonewall Riots

Paralleling developments in the areas of feminist anthropology and gender, the last several decades have seen a blossoming of interest in sexuality studies within anthropology, both in terms of theoretical innovation and a diverse array of ethnographic analyses. As noted above, early interest in

human sexuality among anthropologists fell squarely within the domain of the voyeuristic. In terms of “serious” research, until the 1970s human sexuality had been largely styled an evolutionary (and hence “natural”) mechanism designed to reproduce the species. Much of this was transformed through the revolutionary social theory of historian-philosopher Michel Foucault (1926–84), whose perspective of the historical contingency and variability of an ostensibly universal “natural” human sexuality has continued to be important for anthropologists and others (Connell, discussed above, is one example).

Perhaps Foucault’s best-known contribution to the study of human sexuality is his discussion of what is sometimes referred to as the **repressive hypothesis**. According to this perspective, the open expression of sexual desire, pleasure, and practices in European modernity has been subject to an increasingly rigorous series of disciplining practices since at least the eighteenth-century Enlightenment. Specifically, this widely disseminated discourse confined “legitimate” sexual expression to the sphere of domestic marriage, while simultaneously excluding from overt expression the many other varieties of sexual desire and behaviour increasingly positioned as “deviant.” Within this regime of surveillance, “non-natural” sexuality had a very small number of outlets through which it could be addressed; notably, prostitution (which aimed to conceal improper sexual acts) and psychiatry (which aimed to discipline the mind/body) provided socially recognized institutions where deviance could be articulated. In his writing, Foucault interrogates the assumption that such social management and control has been as pervasive as is widely assumed—particularly in light of the fact that there seems, embedded in the discourse of repression itself, a preoccupation with sexuality and its expressions.

While many aspects of Foucault’s ideas have been contested, his assertion that ideas connected with sex and sexuality are not natural but have a history that can be “excavated” has endured. His view has been adopted by many postmodern and post-structural theorists who question the meaning and origins of taken-for-granted concepts. Following developments in social theory and historical episodes such as the 1969 **Stonewall Riots** in New York City, new interest in sexuality—its history and social effects—emerged from many quarters. In the United States and other Western democracies, a more sophisticated and mature understanding of human sexuality and its diversities has grown alongside fast-moving developments (both in culture and in law)

in the area of ensuring civil rights for gay Americans. In the twenty-first century, the more inclusive and increasingly ethnicized designation **LGBT** (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) signals the ongoing importance of Foucault's insight into the historical contingency of sexuality.

For many anthropologists, documenting the lives and struggles of people stigmatized and marginalized for their sexualities remains the most pressing issue in ethnography. For others, "deviant" sexual practices (such as those characteristic of the BDSM [bondage, discipline, sadomasochism] community) provide a focus. Still others are deeply involved in political debates about sexuality that turn on such issues as same-sex marriage, women's rights in the areas of sexuality and reproduction, the international AIDS crisis, clitoridectomy (sometimes inaccurately called "female circumcision"), prostitution, and sex-trafficking. Of arguably equal importance in the anthropological study of sexualities is the domain of the so-called normal. While those sexualities that have been historically and culturally stigmatized as unnatural or deviant have understandably received the lion's share of attention from scholars, Foucault's reasoning alerts us to the dangers inherent in allowing some forms (for instance, the Western idealization of heterosexual, romantic monogamy) to remain unmarked—that is, the baseline of normality from which all other forms deviate. That such allegedly "natural" proclivities remain understudied is perhaps a reflection of contemporary political imperatives, but their general absence from study and problematizing obscures the cultural foundations of sexual hegemony in many societies. Thus we believe that much in the same way that a concern for the formation of masculinities came to be incorporated within a more inclusive domain of gender analysis, heterosexualities will eventually become of interest in a discipline that prides itself on challenging cultural conventions and simplistic understanding of the natural.

Far from being discrete strains of activity, many scholar-activists combine concerns for many or all of these issues in their research. Given that most of these foci are inflected by considerations of gender, race, religion, language, international and domestic law, kinship, medicine, human rights, and other dimensions and institutions of culture, they reflect the broadest sweep of anthropological priorities today.

Political Economy

Key Words: anthropological political economy, development and underdevelopment theory, political economy, world-system theory

For many anthropologists working in the 1960s and 1970s, among the most influential of the new perspectives to emerge in social theory were two related schools of analysis: **development and underdevelopment theory** and **world-system theory**. Within sociocultural anthropology, these, together with a fresh reflection on the key tenets of Marxist analysis, became the foundation for a critical perspective generally called **political economy**, or, more precisely, **anthropological political economy**.

Marx and the World System

Key Words: core, modernization, periphery, underdevelopment, world-system

The first incarnation of “political economy” per se dates to the eighteenth century and was originally devised by Enlightenment-era social theorists in their investigation of the origin and nature of, and relationships between, nation-states and their colonial holdings around the world. By way of definition, in his work *A Discourse on Political Economy* (1755), Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–78) distinguished between the terms “particular economy,” which signified “the wise and legitimate government of the house for the common good of the whole family,” and “general” or “political” economy, which extended the particular meaning to “that great family, the State.”

Early theorists such as Rousseau deemed general economic institutions “political” in character because they were manipulated by national governments seeking to maximize gain through capitalist appropriation and exchange. While the governmental and narrowly economic aspects of this first generation of “classical” political economics were soon segmented into distinctive academic disciplines (political science and economics, respectively), this original emphasis on the political character of capitalist exchange persisted in the nineteenth century, when Marx and Engels sought

to understand the morally exploitative dimensions of wealth distribution.

In the twentieth century, the political and economic disparities between the “developed” and “underdeveloped” worlds, growing apace since the breakup of colonialism following World War II, nevertheless remained largely unexamined by social science until the 1960s, when the influential German-born economist André Gunder Frank (1929–2005) began to criticize **modernization**. Frank, a peripatetic scholar who worked in three continents, believed the global capitalist agenda to be more sinister than benign, making dependent satellites of those “developing” nation-states with which the Western world came into contact and systematically extracting surplus goods and labour in exchange for much less. **Underdevelopment** was not, in Frank’s estimation, a product of local conditions but the result of progressive capitalist exploitation.

The most detailed exposition of this kind emerged in the work of Immanuel Wallerstein (b. 1930), an American-born sociologist whose best-known writings on the globalizing character of capitalist economies are found in the three volumes of *The Modern World-System* (1980). In them, he identified the historical emergence of a Euro-American “world-economy” in which bourgeois capitalists in the “**core**” nations of Europe and America appropriate the profits generated by proletarians in the “**periphery**,” or the rest of the world. Like Frank, Wallerstein understood the proletariat to be trapped in a **world-system** of unequal exchange in which Euro-American society penetrated, politically subjugated, and economically exploited external populations and their produce.

Like the theory of Marx and Engels before them, the work of Wallerstein, Frank, and others did not spring into existence *ex nihilo* but was, rather, emblematic of broader trends in and outside of academia. By the early 1960s, radical emancipatory social agendas—such as those associated with the countercultural, anti-war, anti-colonial, gay and lesbian rights, and feminist movements—began to emerge on a large scale in Western society. In the main, the philosophical foundations on which such liberation movements were based originated within the academic world itself and had a marked impact on the development of intellectual discourse from the 1960s through the 1990s.

For sociocultural anthropology especially, these trends heralded an upheaval in how the discipline was to regard itself—an intense period of

reflection and introspection that has not abated to this day. During the 1960s and 1970s, it was becoming increasingly clear to many anthropologists that their discipline not only had failed to problematize the impact of Western colonial and economic imperialism around the world, but also had neglected to recognize the essential links between the rise of anthropological knowledge and colonialism. They began to realize that a large majority of the ethnographic texts composed in the first half of the twentieth century had been written by white Euro-American men, whose work was often made possible by the political and military subjugation of the peoples they studied. In short, many of the remote and exotic communities of the classic ethnographic gaze were captive to, and dependent on, a global system of capitalism and militarism. Many anthropologists came to believe, with horror, that their discipline had been the unwitting accomplice of the colonial endeavour and that it had profited from the oppression of the very peoples whom many well-intentioned ethnographers sought to frame in a sympathetic manner.

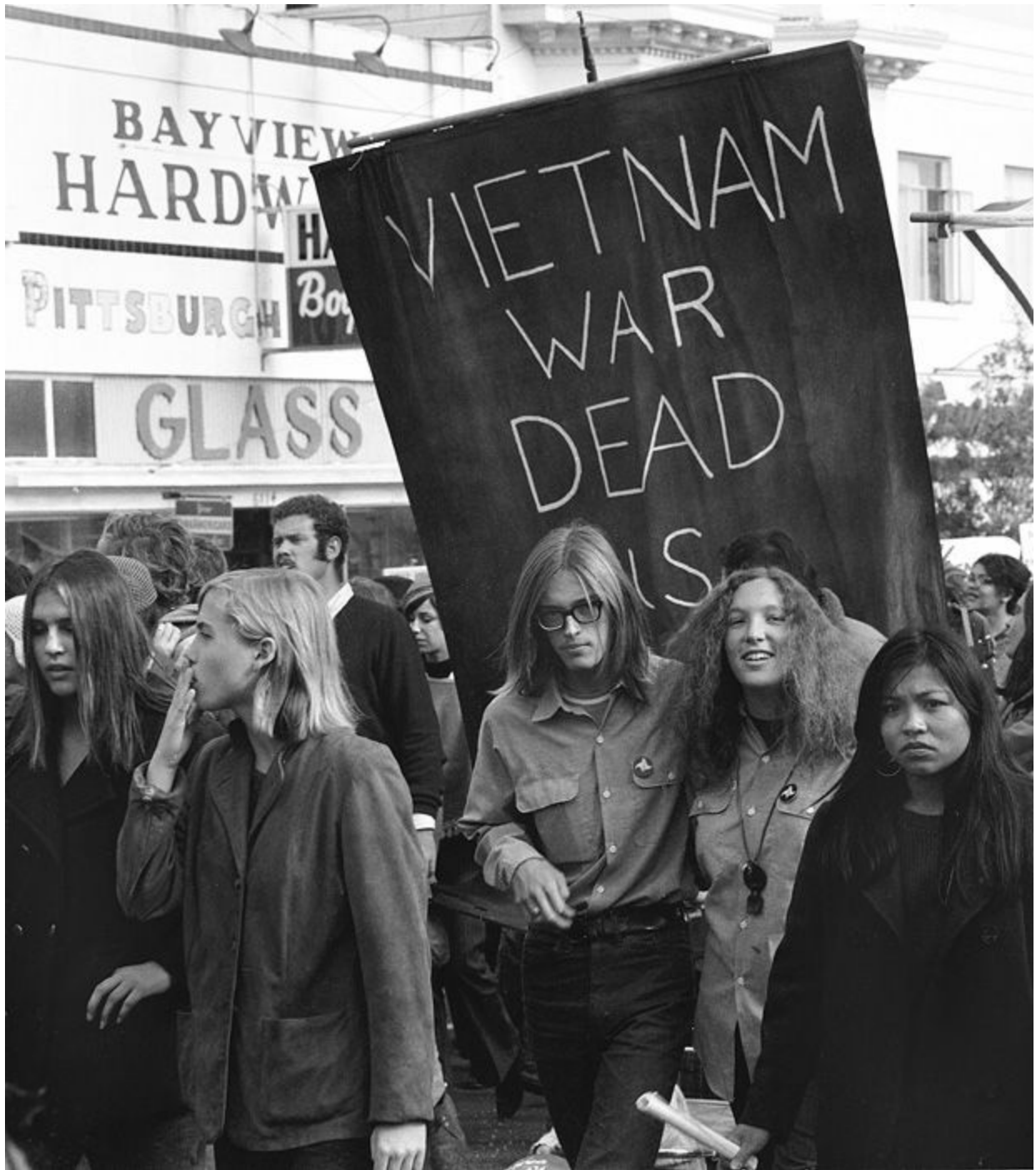


FIGURE 3.7 Protesting the War in Vietnam: During the 1960s and 1970s, anti-war and other political protest movements promoted reflexivity within anthropology.

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Sins of the Fathers

Key Words: authoritative knowledge, great tradition, little tradition

The epistemological challenge posed by Frank and Wallerstein, together with the revolutionary political climate of the 1960s' intellectual world, represented the culmination of a number of theoretical and moral crises that had been troubling anthropologists for a generation, primarily in relation to the growing disaffection with structural analysis in its various forms. Therefore, disaffection and disillusionment among the anthropological rank-and-file were not, strictly speaking, new developments, even occurring as they did in the tumultuous 1960s.



FIGURE 3.8 Robert Redfield (1897–1958): Redfield developed a theoretical distinction between “great” and “little” traditions, foreshadowing some of the insights of anthropological political economy.

Photograph by Blackstone Studios, New York.

In the British tradition, Gluckman and Leach, among others, had been steadily working since the 1940s to correct the “sins” of their disciplinary fathers by advocating sweeping revisions to structural-functionalism in order to make it more politically and historically relevant. Moreover, as early as the 1950s, American anthropologists had also been feeling less and less comfortable with the idea that the discipline must study timeless, self-contained, and largely rural communities. Notably, in an effort to cultivate a more historically aware anthropology, Robert Redfield (1897–1958) developed a theoretical distinction between the **great tradition** of the literate, religious, and urban to contrast with the **little tradition** of the oral, magical, and rural. Formulations heavily grounded in a Durkheimian concept of structure or organic analogy, as were those of British and French anthropologists, were subject to particular scrutiny.

Still, the theoretical insights that were to revolutionize anthropological theory merely simmered until the 1960s. It was during this decade that many basic assumptions about the character and truth-value of anthropological knowledge came under serious attack from various quarters both within the field and without. Among the most strident of anthropological criticisms was that the pristine, timeless, and self-contained organic community of anthropological invention was, in reality, just that—a figment of the ethnographic imagination. A more powerful understanding of human societies, it was argued, would seek to circumvent Cartesian assumptions of Western bourgeois culture: that there existed an untamed and unchanging primitive “Other” that would undoubtedly benefit from contact with the materially wealthy, the literate, the industrial, and the otherwise “civilized.” Similarly, a much-cherished notion of the empirical researcher was also called into question. No longer was it taken for granted that the world was easily or dispassionately observed or that the authors of ethnography were themselves utterly impartial or objective. Seeking to displace these anachronistic perspectives, a number of scholars began to display, rather than conceal or mystify, the various conflicts, class interests, and arrangements of power and dependency embedded in the history of global capitalism—a history in which anthropology itself had played a role. It was out of this “post-”structural concern for social process, power, conflict, and the origin of **authoritative knowledge** that anthropological political economy was born.

Ideology, Culture, and Power

Key Words: hegemony, ideology

Anthropological political economy was, then, a product of its times. Distinguishing these anthropologists from their colleagues working in one or another materialist or symbolic subdiscipline was their desire to understand the nature of encounters between large-scale regional, national, and international capitalist forces and local, non-Western societies and cultural traditions. To this extent, the new perspective shared the general goals of economic historians like Frank and Wallerstein.

In contrast to world-system theory, however, anthropologists working within this perspective remained resolute in their commitment to understanding the autonomy and integrity of local societies and cultures, especially in the non-Western world. These, it was argued, were not culturally fragile communities that could (or should) be simply dissolved by the imperialist policies and agendas of global capitalism, no matter how well-intentioned the ambitions of international development or patronizing Western powers might be. Rather, a more enlightened moral and theoretical stance demanded study of the *mutually* significant encounters between capitalist economies and local societies around the world, arguing, in effect, that there did not exist a single world-system, but many. Explicit in this research objective was the idea that the effects of capitalism did not constitute a “one-way street” and that local peoples and cultures exercised a degree of agency in accepting, transforming, or even rejecting the expansion of market economies. If such subtle and multifarious processes were taking place, these anthropologists wanted to know how, and in what ways? In sum, as a group, anthropological political economists remained anthropologists in the best traditions of sociocultural analysis dating back to Malinowski and Boas.

At this point, an important question arises about the nature of political economic theory in anthropology. It is well and good to advocate a study of the encounter between radically different systems of cultural and economic behaviour, but *how*, precisely, do these worlds of experience interpenetrate and affect one another?

The political economic tradition within anthropology has viewed culture as being shaped in the context of unequal access to wealth and power. This perspective, drawing as it does on Marxist assumptions about conflict between social and economic groups, may be thought of as materialist because the material conditions of human existence are understood to

condition the character of social relations. However, unlike cultural materialism, which viewed infrastructure (modes of production and reproduction) as a primary determinant of culture, political economy, like structural Marxism, has considered the material conditions giving rise to these as being grounded in **ideology**. Because ideologies are constructed systems of ideas, they reflect and perpetuate the specific interests of their authors. For political economy, following Marx, such interests are inscribed in the ways in which a society differentiates itself according to socioeconomic class, gender, and ethnicity, to name but a few prominent criteria. Whoever controls the means of producing wealth and power, it is argued, also controls conditions for the production of knowledge itself. When knowledge about the world is taken for granted, or unquestioned, it loses its arbitrary character and comes to be seen as “natural.” Ideology at this stage ceases merely to embody the interests of one group within society and becomes a dominant perspective of the society; it is taken for granted by the powerful and powerless alike. Unchallenged dominant ideologies, such as that cluster of heterogeneous meanings and activities that makes up global capitalism, assert the economic and political interests of some while simultaneously “mystifying” this essential inequality in power relations for others. Political economists refer to this mystification as **hegemony**.

As this suggests, the anthropological concept of culture had the potential to be reformulated when set within a political economic context. Positioning themselves in the idealist-materialist “breach” between the cognitive, symbolic, and interpretive camps on the one hand and various manifestations of materialism on the other, political economists redefined culture as a system of objective and concrete forces, or ideologies, the effects of which might be investigated ethnographically. Accordingly, a recent generation of theorists has proposed that the unity, the objectivity, and even the existence of culture ought not to be assumed. Rather, the matter-of-fact, taken-for-granted quality of culture should be recast as problematic because a political economic perspective on the relationships between nation-states raises significant (and troubling) theoretical and moral questions about the historical conditions in which particular “cultures” and social groups come to exist, become powerful, or, as the case may be, become dependent or subjugated.

Abstract though this theoretical edifice undoubtedly is, the main tenets of political economy are grounded and given practical depth in much of the detailed ethnographic research that has characterized publishing in this

subfield. For example, in his influential ethnography *The Devil and Commodity Fetishism in South America* (1980), Michael Taussig (b. 1940) argues that the inequities of capitalism are the subject of critical evaluation by poor labourers, who employ the Judeo-Christian Devil as a moral commentary on a system of economic relations over which they have little or no control. In Taussig's scheme, it is the local culture, rather than the doctrines of industrial capitalism, that creates meaning out of an encounter between radically different societies. More recently, the two-volume series entitled *Of Revelation and Revolution* (1991, 1997), by John Comaroff (b. 1945) and Jean Comaroff (b. 1946), has similarly analyzed the impact of colonialism in South Africa by applying many of the same concepts.

Other prominent examples of anthropological texts that incorporate an explicitly political economic framework are *Europe and the People Without History* (1982) by Eric Wolf (1923–99); *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History* (1985) by Sidney Mintz (1922–2015); *Anthropologies and Histories: Essays in Culture, History, and Political Economy* (1989) by William Roseberry (1950–2000); and *Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter* (1973), edited by Talal Asad (b. 1933).

The effort within anthropological political economy to understand the complex character and interdependency of global and local processes certainly illuminated the changing and malleable character of culture, but for many anthropologists such issues raised more questions than they answered. Among the most troublesome was this: If past ethnographic representations of the “exotic” peoples did not so much reflect objective reality as further the norms, values, and assumptions of Western society (i.e., that there were indeed primitive and timeless cultures in dire need of civilizing), how was a new generation of cultural anthropologists to liberate itself from ethnocentrism and still construct accurate and meaningful accounts of cultures which, in the final analysis, were still very different from those of Euro-American scholars? Part of the answer to this question came in the form of a new branch of literary and cultural criticism: “postcolonial theory.”

Postcolonialism

Key Words: Hinduism, multiculturalism, postcolonial perspective

As early as the 1950s, the disintegration of European colonialism following

World War II was raising questions of importance to anthropological theorists about the relationship between the developed and developing worlds. Wishful thinking aside, many anthropologists found it increasingly difficult to take seriously the existence of those pristinely bucolic communities that had been the discipline's bread and butter for decades. "Post" colonial states and societies did not simply revert back to a pre-colonial period when they achieved autonomy. Instead, it was clear that they and the powers that had dominated them were *both* profoundly transformed by the experience. In the case of the former, postcolonial states were left with a myriad of infrastructural, cultural, and economic conditions that could not simply be wiped away. With respect to the latter, former colonial powers were transformed in subtle and not-so-subtle ways: subtle in terms of the corrosive effects of power mingled with racism and class antagonisms, not-so-subtle in terms of the great diasporic movements of people from the periphery to the metropole. The consequences of immigration from former colonies to centres of power continue to reverberate in twenty-first-century Europe, where underclasses of migrant labour have been spawned together with public-housing projects into which migrants have been ghettoized. Beyond the predictable unrest, political turmoil, and social injustice on various levels, another effect of this process has been that the centre no longer "recognizes" itself: where once it was white, it is now brown, and where once it was Christian, it is now swamped in a multiplicity of faiths and non-Western rituals. In 2015, the world's attention was riveted on the staggering drama of hundreds of thousands of refugees seeking entry into Europe from nearby war-torn countries such as Iraq, Libya, and Syria. In the postcolonial period, the proverbial chickens have most definitely come home to roost.



FIGURE 3.9 Cecil Rhodes Straddling Africa: In Victorian times, colonialist Cecil Rhodes (1853–1902) dreamed of a single railway linking British territories from Egypt to South Africa.

“The Rhodes Colossus Striding from Cape Town to Cairo,” *Punch*, 10 December 1892.

Through the 1960s and 1970s, these developments contributed to an unsettled quality within anthropology that fermented without clear resolution, direction, or theoretical innovation. Then, in 1979, perhaps the most powerful and articulate exponent and champion of a **postcolonial perspective** published a book that would set a new moral and epistemological course for anthropology. The book was *Orientalism*, and the scholar was Edward W. Said (1935–2003). Said's influence and stature across various academic disciplines (including political science, anthropology, history, literary criticism, philosophy, music, and cultural studies) were extensive, to say the least. The late journalist Christopher Hitchens (1949–2011) once remarked that Said's followers constituted not so much a "school" as a "diaspora." In addition to his contributions to scholarship, Said's legacy is also grounded in his activism on behalf of dispossessed peoples (especially Palestinians) who were the frequent focus of much of his non-academic as well as academic writing. This interest was doubtless connected to his upbringing as a Palestinian Christian in Jerusalem. Given his political vision, Said at times courted controversy, particularly among those who disdained pro-Palestinian politics. In anthropology, he may certainly be considered a forerunner of "public anthropology," a stream of interest that promotes anthropology as a moral undertaking as well as a scientific one.

The publication of *Orientalism* (1979) is widely regarded as a seminal moment in what has become a dynamic interdisciplinary field of postcolonial studies. Said seeks in this series of essays to decipher the mechanisms of control employed by the British and French colonial empires to circumscribe and objectify the mysterious and exotic "Oriental" subjects of imperial power. Within anthropology, the growing numbers of those influenced by Said found especially troubling their discipline's undeniable historical participation in these relations of inequality. They were haunted by the possibility that they themselves, together with their disciplinary forebears, had played a role in violating those same non-Western peoples whose right to exist they had championed and for whom they had frequently become self-appointed advocates. Adopting a self-consciously postcolonial perspective has therefore involved both an analysis of the effects of Western expansion into, and domination of, the non-Western world and a moral discourse according to which the insidious effects of imperialism are viewed as an ongoing problem—not vanquished simply by the withdrawal of Western empires from political and military domination. At the broadest level, a

question posed by the postcolonial critique can be put in this way: How have indigenous societies of the colonial world been obliged to change in response to the history of military, economic, and ideological dominion imposed upon them since at least the sixteenth century? Just as significantly, postcolonial anthropologists have also endeavoured to problematize these encounters by styling them as an opportunity for scholars to devise new ways of imagining the West's vision of itself in relation to the non-Western world.



FIGURE 3.10 Colonial Anthropologist?: E.E. Evans-Pritchard (1902–73) poses with some Zande boys in Sudan in the late 1920s.

PRM 1998.341.576. Reproduced by permission of Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford.

Talal Asad, for instance, has argued in *Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter* (1973), an influential book that predated *Orientalism* by several years, that the really interesting questions in postcolonial studies do not concern whether non-European societies and cultures continue in the present to be overwritten by European institutions and histories, but rather the *extent to which* non-Europeans have variously elided, appropriated, and hybridized European forms within their own systems of cultural knowledge and practice. Such questions may be addressed only by looking at the mechanisms employed to condition social understanding. In Asad's judgement, it is not the case that colonial regimes have eradicated non-Western civilizations, although the situation is sometimes framed this way in public discourse. Rather, the complex cultural mingling ushered in by the colonial encounter suggests a far more subtle set of processes in which indigenous histories are being rewritten by those who appropriate Western ones. Similarly, in a 1998 essay, Vivek Dhareshwar seeks to unveil the complex epistemological problems that attend European theoretical exposition of the non-European world—particularly in the case of India. Taking to task the “arid debates” on such topics as relativism and **multiculturalism** that he sees saturating the Western theoretical tradition, Dhareshwar proposes that a “metatheory” is needed in order to explain Western assumptions that infuse ideas of Otherness. He suggests that the very notion of cultural multiplicity is itself the product of Western epistemology, and for this reason it can neither be made intelligible nor ring true to the lived experience of subjects in postcolonial settings. What, he asks, are the specific conditions under which Western theoretical positions and descriptions are possible? By way of example, Dhareshwar points to debates concerning secularism and religion in modern India. Since “**Hinduism**” is itself a Western construct, he argues, and one nested within a broader category, “religion,” it makes little sense to engage in argument about secularism in Indian society. These categories say more about Western Cartesian reasoning than they do about Indian traditional culture, which draws no sharp distinction between the religious and the secular. Likewise, Hinduism itself has no value as a category outside the Western system that has created it as an explanatory cipher and *sine qua non* of Indian culture. Only when such issues have been revisited in scholarship, he maintains, can a truly dynamic theory of culture be built.

Throughout the 1970s, political economy in anthropology, conditioned by a surging interest in postcolonial theory in other humanistic disciplines, in

some ways sought to rewrite the idea of social structure to acknowledge the moral and epistemological ills of the European colonial encounter. Even though such efforts incorporated an explicit concern for power relations and social hierarchies, they could not escape their own theoretical assumptions—which, much like the schools of theory that had come before, were rooted in a scientific and structural analysis largely alien to the peoples among whom anthropologists worked. Grounded as it was in Marx’s political philosophy, even political economy could ultimately be read as ethnocentric, because it held culture to be the product of materialist power struggles—a uniquely Western form of analysis. As the 1980s began, more and more anthropologists found themselves questioning whether it made sense to continue reducing complex cultural reality to any single cause or configuration of causes, given that no theory they devised would be a transparent window on reality, but a “text” inextricably rooted in Western biases. These questions were and remain significant because they cut to the very heart of what anthropology attempts to do: devise powerful and streamlined models that explain how people interact with each other and the world. Was it possible, many began to wonder, for anthropological knowledge to remain valuable given its foundations in the European Enlightenment? The fact that extracting anthropology from its “modernist” heritage of Cartesian objectivism was extraordinarily difficult proved no impediment to the efforts made by many anthropologists who came to be called (whether they embraced the label or not) “postmodern.” It is to this diffuse body of work that we now turn.

Postmodernity

Key Words: modernity, nihilism, postmodern, post-structural, reflexivity

While transactionalism, feminist anthropology, and political economy hastened the demise of the traditional structural-anthropological picture of society and culture, the advent of the **postmodern** perspective, or postmodernity, is often credited with “exploding” the culture concept once and for all. While this is an exaggeration, it is certain that the theoretical concerns that ethnographers began to express during the 1960s and 1970s—concerns that feminist anthropologists and anthropological political economists, in particular, sought to address—were not easily resolved. While not forming a movement properly labelled as homogeneous, postmodernists working within a variety of disciplines have certainly shared a perspective that emphasizes the subjectivity of experience and, consequently, the impossibility of any one form of authoritative knowledge. In anthropology, the so-called postmodern turn had the effect of advancing and refining debate over the theoretical and ethical issues first raised by political economists and others.

Unfortunately, the precise meanings of the terms “postmodern” and “postmodernity” are still further obscured by their all-too-frequent conflation with another weighty adjective: “**post-structural**.” Strictly speaking, the terms post-structural and the noun derived from it, post-structuralism, refer, straightforwardly enough, to the growing malaise and increasing uneasiness with structuralism that erupted in the 1970s, particularly from within the academic field of literary criticism. Especially in France, where Lévi-Strauss’s work and person had achieved a lofty interdisciplinary stature and influence during the 1960s and 1970s, fickle dissatisfaction with what came to be seen as an overly cognitive, insufficiently political, socially uncontextualized body of theory fuelled a wave of post-Lévi-Straussian zeal among such philosophical, left-leaning, and literary luminaries as Jacques Derrida (1930–2004) and Jacques Lacan (1901–81).

This initial flood of interest in deconstructing mental, cultural, and social structures as manifested in literary and philosophical discourse has had a deep impact on the shape and focus of anthropological theory, notably in the work of Michel Foucault and Pierre Bourdieu, and has understandably

become identified with a broader philosophical and political-economic critique of Enlightenment objectivity within anthropology and other human sciences. Therefore, while a contemporary generation of anthropologists tends to employ the terms postmodern and post-structural interchangeably, it is worth noting that postmodernity embraces a much wider range of interdisciplinary dispositions in which the “modernist” acquisition of scientific and objective knowledge is critiqued as a Western, Enlightenment-inspired project. This discussion will henceforth concern itself primarily with the notion of the postmodern, although where postmodernity illumines (or stalks, depending on one’s point of view), post-structuralism is seldom far behind.



FIGURE 3.11 Postmodern Challenge: Many anthropology students find postmodern theory difficult to fathom.

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Postmodernists have been accused of seeking to transcend and supplant

modernity and even to do away with scientific anthropology, narrowly conceived, altogether. There are two major objections to this rather hyperbolic rush to judgement. First, even the most zealous champions of postmodernism acknowledge that the logic of modernity is not easily dispensed with because it is embodied in key Western assumptions about an objective world that can and should be subdued and controlled—politically, economically, and ideologically—by orderly, dispassionate, and rational Europeans and Euro-Americans. More important is a misunderstanding that many have about the purposes of cultural deconstruction and **reflexivity**. There is a significant distinction to be made between the brands of **nihilism** and solipsism many postmodernists are accused of embracing and the pursuit of more penetrating insights into social and cultural processes. Most anthropological theorists who are dismissed with the epithet “postmodernist” reject the idea that they are not engaged in developing new knowledge that more accurately reflects the experienced world. The difference is that these scholars—a majority of contemporary social and cultural anthropologists—accept that scientific accounts are like any other, the products of social negotiation and construction, not the mere description of objective, self-evident facts. Because so-called postmodernists push the definition of what it means to do science, a serious claim can be made that they are *more* scientific than their positivistically inclined colleagues.

This, however, is a debate best reserved for the professional journals and classrooms. For the moment, some roots of the postmodernist perspective can be explored in the works of three seminal theorists. Paul Feyerabend, Michel Foucault, and Pierre Bourdieu have all influenced the emergence of a distinctive perspective that underscores much contemporary anthropological theory. These are followed by discussions of current approaches that unite critical cultural analysis with interpretive anthropology. Most conspicuous among such approaches has been medical anthropology, a diverse body of research devoted to the cross-cultural investigation of health and healing systems and practices.

Paul Feyerabend

Key Words: diary disease, normal science, paradigm, philosophical anarchist, scientific revolution

A genealogy of postmodernity might begin with the Austrian-born **philosophical anarchist** Paul Feyerabend (1924–94), who argued that there is no logical way to choose between conventional scholarly models, or paradigms. The concept of paradigms came from historian and philosopher of science Thomas Kuhn (1922–96), who in his highly influential book *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962) argued that science is largely conventional, consisting of answers to questions that scientists agree are appropriate to ask at a particular time and place. For a while, according to Kuhn, this period of so-called **normal science** yields results, but, eventually, nonconforming observations instigate scientific “revolutions” whereby old questions are superseded by new ones to which the observations conform. A new period of normal science ensues, until other nonconforming observations instigate another **scientific revolution**. Kuhn called the intellectual framework for normal science a “**paradigm**” and the process of scientific revolution a “paradigm shift.” His prime example was the shift from Aristotelian to Newtonian science in the Scientific Revolution of the seventeenth century. Although he acknowledged that the history of science is progressive, his most influential point was that scientific paradigms fundamentally differ.

Extending Kuhn’s perspective, Feyerabend argued that there is no logical way to choose between paradigms because all such explanations are inevitably *interpretations*. Scientific thought and institutions, like any others, are the products of lived experience, as are their assumptions about the “truth,” or authoritative nature, of their special knowledge. The truth-claims of scientists, Feyerabend insisted, cannot therefore be understood as superior to other manners of explanation for social phenomena; rather, *all* explanations are basically incommensurable. Likewise, an important insight of anthropologists in recent years has been that modernity has carried forward these truth-claims since at least the sixteenth century. The recognition has been that this project is *itself* an historical event. The modernist perspective itself constitutes a cultural artifact—the product of creative social action through time and *not* a “revelation” or awakening to the true understanding of an external objective reality.

This revolution in perspective has caused both great excitement and upheaval in the humanities and social sciences. While a number of scholars stand out for their extensive contributions to developing a postmodern perspective—Antonio Gramsci (1892–1937), Anthony Giddens (b. 1938),

and Raymond Williams (1921–88), for instance—two in particular have directly influenced the course of anthropological theory and deserve special consideration: the French social theorists Michel Foucault and Pierre Bourdieu. At the outset of this discussion, it is only fair to point out that neither theorist has identified his own work with that of “radical” postmodernists within cultural anthropology. In fact, Foucault’s work has been dismissed by some as an overly structural approach that does little to account for the agency and creativity of individuals, while Bourdieu went to some pains to distance his work from the work of those he considered to be nihilistically minded cultural interpretivists and deconstructionists who deny outright the possibility of objectivity in social science. Rejecting this proposition, Bourdieu felicitously, if cynically, dubbed this philosophy within anthropology the “**diary disease**.” Foucault and Bourdieu should not, therefore, be thought of as “postmodern” in narrow terms. Rather, their contribution has been to theorize such concepts as power, resistance, and agency in ways that have importantly influenced a recent generation of cultural anthropologists.

Michel Foucault

Key Words: discourses of power, knowledge, madness

Writing in the 1970s, Michel Foucault, a famous and outspoken French philosopher and historian of culture, viewed social institutions and relationships as being intimately grounded in a pervasive economy of **discourses of power** that shape relations between people at all levels in a society. In his formulation, “power” ceased to be solely a function of formal political institutions and became something inscribed in everyday life. The many different roles played by individuals (employers, employees, doctors, patients, men, women, priests, the faithful, teachers, students, etc.) all bear the stamp of certain kinds of relations between people in which some dominate and others are subjugated. Whoever dominates these relationships, Foucault argued, also controls the economic and ideological conditions under which “**knowledge**” or “truth” (and therefore “reality”) are defined. Dominating classes inscribe their power, in Foucault’s scenario, in and through a series of tactics and strategies that instruct people to “be” a certain way in the world. In this way, beginning with the Enlightenment and the rise

of the nation-state in the eighteenth century, discourses of science, sexuality, and humanism became dominant in European society, preserving their power through mechanisms of control such as prisons, hospitals, asylums, and museums. Foucault's central contribution to postmodern social theory has been to show how power determines different social forms through history. Because modernity is viewed, alongside other configurations of knowledge, as the product of power, the objective character of scientific knowledge is shown to be an historical construct.

An influential example of the Foucauldian perspective can be found in his work *Madness and Civilization* (1973), in which he charted the development of the concept of insanity in Western society. While his argument is often subtle and complex, a simplified synopsis runs as follows. Until the late eighteenth century, what Western society currently calls "insanity," or "**madness**," was viewed by educated Europeans and Americans as being of supernatural origin. This reflected the European medieval and post-medieval assumption that the world and the universe were understood with recourse to the inscrutable and purposeful Will of God. In this context, there was a social tendency to accommodate "mad" people because such individuals were often viewed as being "touched" by, or "fools" for, God—a belief often accompanied by the idea that they were spiritually powerful, or wise, and thereby capable of better expressing divine will than those around them. Interestingly, anthropologists have observed this phenomenon in small-scale, non-Western societies in which "shamans" and "witch doctors" are often people who are perceived to be gifted with spiritual authority or power. Likewise, a good example of this social role being expressed in Western literature is the importance of the "fool" in Shakespeare's play *King Lear* (c. 1605).

During the European Renaissance of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, scholarly knowledge was characterized by a rediscovery of classical antiquity and an interest in the Platonic ideal of rationality and the power of the human intellect—a process that anticipated the rise of humanism. Foucault argued that under this new epistemological regime, the beginnings of a fabled "Age of Reason," the world ceased to be God-centred, and those conditions which had to that point been thought of as tinged with divine power came to be revisited under the sharp gaze of humanism and rationality. One effect of this process was that those considered to be mad were re-evaluated and found wanting within the new human-centred scale of

norms and values. Far from being chosen by God, henceforth these individuals were no longer even fully considered people as such. Having lost or been denied the faculty of reason—a defining characteristic, in the early humanistic perspective, of what it means to be human—they came to be seen as almost certainly defective.



FIGURE 3.12 Randle McMurphy (Jack Nicholson) Confronts Nurse Ratched (Louise Fletcher) in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (1975): This highly acclaimed film captures many of Michel Foucault's views on madness and civilization.

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In the seventeenth through nineteenth centuries, with the rise of science and the philosophy of positivism (i.e., the possibility of acquiring objective knowledge), the role of the divine in human affairs was reduced still further, and “insanity” came to be seen as a disease in which the intellect was no longer under the control of those afflicted. With the insane no longer perceived as fit to live in society, the asylum was founded to enforce and institutionalize a separation between rational society and that which was

considered pathologically irrational.

What becomes of those considered to be insane under these new conditions? Because their new status precluded consideration as complete human beings, such individuals began to be considered a part of the natural world. Like other aspects of the natural world subject to scientific scrutiny, penetration, and investigation, their bodies, too, became the objects of scientific fascination and investigation. One goal of this work was to find new ways to contain and investigate the insane—a process that inaugurated the disciplines of psychiatry, psychology, and, indeed, the medical professions as a whole.

For a late-twentieth-century readership, such a description of events could not help but be disturbing from an ethical point of view, given its assumptions about the essentially inhumane nature of science and medicine. Still, Foucault's central objective in this history of madness was not to moralize but to shore up his theoretical position on the power of authoritative discourses to shape and define what people accept as objective truth. Hence, none of the changes that took place between the medieval era and the Enlightenment occurred because there was a truly objective transformation in the condition of people designated as mad. Whereas the modern world considers scientific discovery and knowledge to be the result of a gradual accumulation of objective information, Foucault argued that those things that in any time or place are considered truth and objective knowledge are themselves contingent on a relationship between the vagaries of history and shifting power relations between social classes. In short, what counts as “real” knowledge about the natural world—in this example, the mental condition of those designated as insane—is determined by those classes of people that possess the authority to shape and control knowledge itself.

In this way, Foucauldian theory redefines the concept of “knowledge” itself. No longer a reference to real or objective understanding, knowledge is primarily a way of naming and ordering the world that favours the powerful and seeks to maintain the status quo. Moreover, the quality of knowledgeable “expertise” in a given field is bestowed upon accredited individuals who participate in institutions that help to maintain this status quo. Specialists such as judges, lawyers, doctors, teachers, and scientists are experts only because they are designated to be experts by the socially powerful. In the case of the transition from the medieval era to the Enlightenment, Foucault identifies a “changing of the guard”: the epistemological authorities and

assumptions of the medieval world (the Church and its earthly representatives) are replaced by a new set of authorities (e.g., states, medical institutions, prisons, etc.) whose power derives from their insight into the newly emergent epistemologies of humanism and science. Besides madness, Foucault wrote widely about the history of sexuality, using the same analytic framework of authoritative knowledge and discourses of power. He is recognized as the first public intellectual in France to die of HIV/AIDS.

Pierre Bourdieu

Key Words: doxa, fields, habitus, practice (or praxis), symbolic capital, symbolic domination, taxonomies

Addressing similar issues relating to power and domination, but coming at the problem from another angle, French intellectual Pierre Bourdieu (1930–2002) worked during the 1970s and 1980s to develop a theory that places individuals at the centre of social process. Unlike Foucault, whose theory viewed individuals and their interrelationships as being determined by discourses of power, Bourdieu held that these same persons and social arrangements are created by human agents who assemble their cultures through **p ractice, or praxis**. What people “do” in practice is create, reproduce, and change a variety of **taxonomies** that are understood to be the basis of social relations. These taxonomies are made up of symbolic representations that do not merely reflect ideas about the world but actually *make the world* what it is for the people who live in it. Individuals are powerful to the extent that they can *impose* on others taxonomies that reproduce their own power and authority; they are powerless to the extent that they are unable to escape their social positioning in relation to the taxonomies created by others. Either way, the taxonomies wielded by the powerful in relation to the powerless are relevant only insofar as they are lodged within a configuration of social relations.

The notion of the “relational” is so significant in Bourdieu’s thought because it helps to move social science away from those various formulations of social structure as conceived by an earlier generation of Durkheimian thinkers. For Bourdieu, social structures and cultures were not to be compared to machines or organisms, because culture and society are ultimately not things but systems of relationships, or **fields**. He defined fields

as fluid, open-ended “networks” of “objective relations between positions.” Complex societies, he argued, were composed of any number of fields (i.e., artistic, intellectual, economic, religious, etc.), which, although coexisting spatially and temporally, were nevertheless discrete and integrated according to their own internal “logics.” Within fields, the total imposition of one group’s set of taxonomies upon another’s results in the production of a “natural” order, or **doxa**, in which the essentially arbitrary character of the powerful taxonomies is obscured. What emerges, for the powerful and powerless alike, is a sense that certain thoughts, feelings, and actions are part of the outer objective world, while others (those of the dominated) are “unnatural.”

In short, social relations that come to be taken for granted are actually the result of one interest group’s **symbolic domination** of others within a society. What is seen to be “real” in any society, from this perspective, inevitably reflects the point of view of whoever’s interests are served by that reality. Unlike Foucault’s model, in which individuals are simply dominated by a powerful system that exists independently of their own actions, Bourdieu’s model stipulates that this system of meaning-in-conflict is characterized by individual social actors participating in a pervasive economy of symbols in which autonomous individuals and groups attempt to accrue and distribute **symbolic capital**, or symbols of prosperity and prestige, with differing degrees of success. A critical feature of this system, and one that distinguishes Bourdieusian from Foucauldian thought, is that even individual members of the dominated classes within this economic system are sometimes able to transform the nature of what counts as socially prestigious or valuable by creating alternative taxonomies that resist those imposed by the powerful. Bourdieu referred to the wellspring of this individual agency as the “**habitus**,” or the ways in which personal history and social positioning allow individuals to improvise or innovate.

Anthropology as Text

Key Word: social constructionism

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, Foucault’s and Bourdieu’s ideas had a dramatic impact on anthropological theory. Depending on one’s sympathies, their work has been either highly illuminating or deeply mystifying.

Regardless, it is clear that for many anthropologists, suddenly there seemed no centre, no firm ground from which students of human life could gaze objectively at their subject matter. Henceforth, no “truth” would be taken for granted and no perspective left unchallenged. Deconstruction became a new watchword for anthropologists, because the sanguine ambition of positivism to explain the world was no longer seen as a possibility. On the contrary, to be a “vulgar” positivist was to be misguided because it was not the culture itself that needed explaining so much as the anthropologist’s explanation of that culture. It was the representation or account of a people, in other words, that required understanding, or deconstruction, because discrete cultures as “objects” are only apprehended at all through such accounts, which are themselves enshrined in the ethnographic text. Some years before, Clifford Geertz and the interpretive school had also employed the metaphor of text in an effort to show that, like the written page, cultures might also be read and deciphered for meaning. Unlike Geertz’s approach, which has been considered rather naïve and inconsistent by postmodernity for its perceived willingness to turn the ethnographic gaze on everyone’s cultural meanings but the ethnographer’s own, postmodernist authors claim to probe greater depths of social reality by self-consciously reflecting on the contingent cultural factors embedded in their own representations.



FIGURE 3.13 The Perfect Physique: In the culture of the gym, do men use their bodies as social capital?

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Over the years, some critics have mistakenly understood this to mean that

postmodernity denies outright the existence of objective reality and have accused postmodernist researchers of solipsism. These claims notwithstanding, it is ironic that the postmodern perspective in effect recapitulates an idea that has been prominent in anthropology since Boas and his students first championed the cause of cultural relativism in the first decades of the twentieth century: that culture mediates and conditions all knowledge of the world, like a lens. In this way, while it is clear that a world truly does exist independently of how we know it, it is equally clear that there is no perspective, scientific or otherwise, that is not in the last instance rooted in particular histories and biases—an integral feature, seemingly, of our common humanity.

In anthropology, the postmodern perspective has been most influential in the writing of ethnography. Anthropologists working in the final decades of the twentieth century became extremely conscious of the subjective nature of the documents they produced. James Clifford and George Marcus's edited volume *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* (1986) has been particularly influential in advancing the ideas that cultural accounts are constructed texts and that the relations among the writer, reader, and subject matter of ethnography are complex and problematic. Whereas standard interpretive approaches would view subjects as creative actors busily constructing their social worlds out of symbols, postmodernists have noted with deep irony that these same ethnographers privilege their own status as external observers. Accordingly, while everybody else was evidently forced to build culture, anthropologists were exempt from this process; it was for them to observe, rather than to be observed. In contrast, postmodern writers argue that ethnography, no less than any other form of creative writing, privileges the authorial perspective. This insight has had deep implications for anthropological theory. Because the account being produced always comes from a particular viewpoint—most often that of the white, middle-class, educated Euro-American male—it reflects and asserts (albeit implicitly) the concerns and interests of its author. True objectivity is hardly possible, because even if researchers deliberately adopted a non-stereotypical object of study, they would still have little choice but to employ the analytical categories and concerns explicitly and implicitly fashioned by the academy and (more broadly) the society in which the knowledge they “possess” has been formed. What goes unquestioned—the division of the ethnographic project into subject and object—betrays the subtle yet powerful influence of

modernity on anthropological theory.

Recognizing the impossibility of pure objectivity, a recent generation of ethnographers has attempted to circumnavigate the ethical and methodological dilemmas raised by postmodern theory. They have done so by looking for ways in which to describe different cultures and societies without denying the subjectivity of the people being analyzed and without laying claim to absolute, or authoritative, knowledge about them. Needless to say, given that anthropology has been suffused with and directed by modernist concerns, this lofty ambition is easier proclaimed than accomplished. Heavily influenced by the writings of Foucault and Bourdieu, one popular strategy has been to show how the subjects of ethnography themselves set about creating and negotiating the categories of meaning that inform their social worlds. Often labelled “**social constructionism**,” after a phrase popularized by sociologists Peter Berger (b. 1929) and Thomas Luckmann (b. 1927) in the 1960s, this methodology attempted to highlight the essentially contingent nature of culture by demonstrating how ethnographic subjects employ language and patterned activity to create, sustain, and change meaning. This approach has been highly influential in anthropological writing. For instance, *The Invention of Tradition* (1992), edited by Eric Hobsbawm (1917–2012) and Terence Ranger (1929–2015), is a collection of historical essays that points to the recent “invented” origins of traditions and practices that are often portrayed as being ancient markers of ethnic identity. In this vein, much attention has been focused by a recent generation of anthropologists on how different forms of human community, such as those identified according to social positioning (i.e., according to such criteria as socioeconomic class, race, ethnicity, and gender), are constructed in and inscribed on a wide variety of historical contexts.

Medical Anthropology

Key Words: allopathic, biomedicine, epiphenomenon, ethnomedical, medical anthropology

While the origins of **medical anthropology** predate the ascendancy of postmodernity within sociocultural anthropology by a number of years, it has been with the emergence of the postmodern perspective in particular that the subfield has come to prominence.

Especially within American anthropology, the term “medical anthropology” has incorporated a range of approaches that variously study the objective role of biology and ecology and interpret the cultural foundations of “folk” medical institutions and practices around the world. While the literature is voluminous across the various branches of medical anthropology, a shortlist of widely used texts includes David Landy’s edited volume *Culture, Disease, and Healing: Studies in Medical Anthropology* (1977), Thomas Johnson and Carolyn Sargent’s edited volume *Medical Anthropology: A Handbook of Theory and Method* (1990), Nancy Scheper-Hughes’s influential ethnography *Death without Weeping: The Violence of Everyday Life in Brazil* (1992), and Andrea Sankar’s *Dying at Home* (1999).

In its broadest aspect, medical anthropology may be defined as the study of the social and cultural dimensions of health and illness, together with indigenous theories of cause and treatment. In contrast with many other subfields of academic anthropology, however, many medical anthropologists have successfully created a professional niche for themselves outside the university system, primarily by turning their knowledge of theory to practical advantage by offering “actionable” insights into clinical practice and public policy formation.

Classical ethnographers have long concerned themselves with the investigation of non-Western practices related to medical knowledge and treatment, or **e thnomedical** systems. One example is Evans-Pritchard’s study of witchcraft as a folk-illness. Generally speaking, ideas about health, illness, misfortune, and supernatural power were viewed by earlier generations of sociocultural anthropologists as part of an integrated social and cultural structure. More recently, the influence of postmodernity, feminist anthropology, and political economy has been felt by ethnomedical researchers, who have come to emphasize the ideological or conflicted nature of indigenous practice. Rather than being elements in an integrated social “whole,” folk medical practices have come to be seen in recent years as one site of contest between conflicting local and translocal ideologies that variously square off against one another or mingle to create new forms of practice, belief, and power relations.

In recent years, Western, or **allopathic, biomedicine** has itself been subject to this level of analytical scrutiny. For instance, building on the work of Foucault, “critical” medical anthropologists such as Nancy Scheper-Hughes (b. 1944), Mark Nichter (b. 1949), and Margaret Lock (b. 1936) view

medicine as having an ideological component. More than a set of insights about how to diagnose and treat illness, biomedicine is treated as but one aspect of Euro-American ideological expansion into the non-Western world. For this reason, many medical anthropologists working from this perspective have advocated a radical decentralization of medical knowledge and practice from the Western medical establishment, itself treated as the product of Enlightenment-era struggles to define the “real.” Thus, biomedical practice cannot be extracted from the political economy of capitalism in which social behaviours and institutions are inevitably shaped and controlled by the experience of Western hegemony.

Other medical anthropologists have been involved in investigating the often complex dynamics that arise between distinctive medical systems. These often come to compete with one another in socioeconomically stratified and heterogeneous societies, such as those one finds in modern Western nation-states. This concern for understanding medical pluralism has been at the heart of an efflorescence of “applied” research undertaken by such anthropologists as Andrea Sankar and Sandra Lane, which, in recent years, has become a prominent feature of debates regarding the formation of public health policy and clinical and psychiatric practice. In contrast to critical medical anthropology, a defining feature of this applied perspective is that practitioners seek to contribute to the amelioration of health care by introducing local, or indigenous, knowledge into biomedical practice, thus making Western medicine of greater utility, especially in non-Western settings. For instance, many applied practitioners are employed by hospitals or international development organizations to assist biomedical professionals in better understanding the cultural factors affecting particular health practices that may, or may not, be perceived as problematic from the position of Western medicine.

Though diverse in its approaches, the mainstream within medical anthropology has in these ways focused squarely on the sociocultural nature of health and illness. Contrasting with both of these, another branch of practice within the subfield has struck a distinctly more “etic” position that also lays claim, in the best Boasian tradition, to being a truly holistic approach to studying human phenomena. Those with an ecological orientation within medical anthropology have looked for patterns in the interrelationships between environmentally conditioned, health-relevant variables (for instance, the prevalence of particular diseases or the availability

of food) and sundry human social and economic practices (for instance, those relating to agriculture or migration). All claims to holism notwithstanding, however, ecologically oriented medical anthropology has drawn withering fire from other quarters within the subfield, and from sociocultural anthropology more generally, for its allegedly “reductionist” position vis-à-vis social and cultural behaviour. According to critics, ecologically oriented medical anthropologists treat culture as a mere reflex, or **epiphenomenon**, of ecological processes. For this reason, they are accused of too seldom placing cultural practice and institutions at the heart of human ecology. This kind of critical anthropological conversation, both inside and outside of medical anthropology, has continued into the early twenty-first century.

PART FOUR

The Early Twenty-First Century

In the early twenty-first century, postmodern theorizing has appeared to plateau, wane, or morph into other theoretical vocabularies, including the vocabulary of globalization, which has been on the rise for the last two decades. At the same time, although it is too early in the century to tell for certain, there also appears to be the beginning of a trend away from grand, or meta-, theories and toward a deeper interest in the practices of anthropologists themselves. A conspicuous development in this regard has been the rise of public anthropology and a related set of concerns about anthropological ethics and public accountability. Linked to all these concerns, and to the ongoing effort to “decolonize” anthropology, anthropologists have also begun to turn their attention to world traditions of anthropology beyond those of the hegemonic powers of Britain, France, and the United States. Finally, a growing number of anthropologists have started to focus on the enormously complex issues surrounding the global revolution in digital information and communication technology.

Globalization

Key Words: creolization, globalization, global village, glocalization

A latter-day heir to world-system theory and anthropological political economy, the study of **globalization**, or “globalization theory,” has been one of the most conspicuous bodies of work to derive from the mingling of these perspectives with postmodernity in the 1980s and 1990s. Because the perspective does not so much prescribe a single method or research agenda as it advocates a general outlook, its supporters have been many and diverse. Among the better known anthropological texts that have been included in this corpus are *Modernity at Large: The Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (1996), by Arjun Appadurai (b. 1949); *Global Culture: Nationalism, Globalization, and Modernity* (1990), edited by Mike Featherstone (b. 1946); and *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture* (1992) by Roland Robertson (b. 1938).



FIGURE 4.1 Stereotyped Tourist: This stereotype embodies some of the globalized expectations that ordinary tourists can take with them to their destinations around the world..

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In the 1960s, Canadian communications theorist Marshall McLuhan (1911–80) famously foreshadowed attention to globalization within the social sciences when he speculated that the world was increasingly being homogenized into a “**global village**” in which the diversity of local cultures was being radically reshaped (and, ultimately, limited) through increasingly advanced and universal systems of communications and travel technology. The “message” conveyed by such technology, he speculated, was in fact identical with the “medium” of its transmission. Hence, societies the world over would inevitably and inexorably become less heterogeneous, forever conditioned by a new global orientation and sensibility.

While the most ominous implications of this prediction have yet to be realized, McLuhan’s insight continues to be valuable for anthropologists working in the early twenty-first century. As one of the perspective’s most eloquent exponents, Roland Robertson, has defined it, the phenomenon of globalization describes both an etic “compression of the world” through processes of increased technological, economic, and cultural interdependence, and an emic awareness of the transformations stimulated by this interdependence—what he calls an “intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole.” Another way of putting this is that globalization-oriented anthropologists ask what are perhaps the next obvious questions to follow from the ideas pioneered by Frank, Wallerstein, and the anthropological political economists: namely, *beyond* the imbalances in political and economic power generated by a capitalist world-system, what *other* sociocultural phenomena do we observe to be consequences of the interpenetration of Western and non-Western cultural worlds, and how are we to characterize and account for these? Infusing these questions with the postmodern concern for individual agency and creativity, students of globalization further inquire how new forms of subjective understanding and reflexivity are produced as a result of these new global forms of interdependence.

This collision between the objective forces of the world-system and the capacity of individuals and communities to construct their own worlds socially and subjectively is not easily described, let alone explained. Following its coining by economists, Robertson uses the term “**glocalization**” to denote the coexistence or co-presence of the universal and the particular in any society. Other terms, such as “**creolization**,” have been borrowed by anthropologists from linguists to articulate much the same

concept. How can anthropologists account, precisely, for this hybridizing tendency?

World-system theorists assert that global capitalist expansion involved the progressive interpenetration, mingling, and outright domination of some social and cultural institutions and practices (those of the so-called developing world) by others (those of the so-called developed world). Adding much-needed nuance to this view, anthropological political economy went on to insist that, while such imbalances in power and authority are certainly created by this encounter of the West with the Rest, they are hardly “totalizing,” or wholly determinative, of cultural form and meaning. Through the subjective understanding and activity of local cultural agents, the hegemony of global capitalism is both changed and resisted. The globalization perspective represents a further refinement of these political-economic ideas, one that is leavened by what we might call a cautionary tale of postmodernity: that society and culture cannot simply be reduced to, or “written off” as, mere effects of a capitalist world-system, no matter how powerful and all-embracing this system might appear from the standpoint of Western eyes. In particular, one insight grounded in this postmodern dictum has been instrumental in shaping globalization theory into a distinctive branch of research in the 1990s and early twenty-first century. This concerns a recognition by many anthropologists that, far from there being a simple reaction to or against the world-system, the “core” of the system is *itself* transformed through contact with its own “periphery,” so much so, in fact, that it becomes difficult to speak of a single world-system at all. A more exact description would identify a multitude of overlapping, interpenetrating world-systems that shape and condition one another.



FIGURE 4.2 Globalized Food: This shop in Hospet, India, sells an eclectic mix of Western and local snacks.

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This “brave new world” sketched by globalization-oriented theorists certainly defies easy description. One useful analogy might be that the world’s societies are now “woven” together culturally, economically, and politically. Like any tapestry or quilt, the threads that comprise this global society are stronger in some places and weaker in others. They merge and intertwine to form patterns, colours, and textures that are quite distinct from those of each thread considered independently. It is these overarching patterns and colours, rather than their local variants, that are the new substance of cultural form in a globalizing age.

To the extent of focusing on the character and influence of the linkages that bind localities together across geographical regions, the globalization perspective has shared a concern with anthropological political economy. However, a new insight introduced by globalization theory is that the

linkages do not describe merely a set of *objective* social, economic, or political relationships between people who are geographically distant from one another. Instead, drawing on the postmodern concern to understand subjectivity and agency, globalization theorists look to the *subjective* dimensions of this process: how does a growing local awareness of global connections and identity both inspire and lay the foundation for new forms of consciousness, cultural meaning, and social practice?



FIGURE 4.3 The Globalization of Language: Could this be the world language of the future?

To cite an early and influential example of this perspective, in his pioneering work *Imagined Communities* (1983), Benedict Anderson (1936–2015) reconstructs the concept of the nation-state from the ground up, effectively arguing that the original European nation-states were “imagined” into being as a result of the post-medieval influence on vernacular languages of what was in the sixteenth century a radically new technology: the print media. Once invented, the exponential dissemination of knowledge, ideas, and language permitted by this new technology empowered local cultural actors both to reflect on the larger political, economic, and cultural processes around them and to develop new perspectives and meanings rooted in the experience of common language and homeland.

It is this emphasis on the production of wholly new subjectivities and “systems” that distinguishes globalization-oriented anthropologists from their predecessors in world-system theory. The globalization perspective insists that local cultures are not passively overwritten by or dissolved within that

unidirectional, apparently unstoppable, global steamroller known as Western industrial capitalism. More often than not, globalization theory holds, the world's allegedly peripheral cultures and societies "hegemonize the hegemonizers" by generating new forms of global cultural consciousness whose roots are neither Western nor easily explained by the logic of political-economic expansion. To the contrary, such formerly "peripheral" cultural phenomena as reggae music, Buddhism, Japanese sushi cuisine, Scots-Irish folk dancing, and Native American artwork and sculpture, to cite but a few examples, would all seem to be non-Western cultural exports that are themselves becoming the bases for global cultural practices. This same phenomenon takes place within the "West" as well. Consider, for instance, the replacement in France of the McDonald's character, Ronald McDonald, with Asterix the Gaul, a popular French character more appealing to the French public, or the decision to serve alcoholic beverages to teenagers in restaurants at Disneyland Paris ("Euro-Disney"), breaking with its American counterparts, Walt Disney World and Disneyland.

Such processes have been facilitated in no small measure by the advent of sophisticated electronic media, communication, and travel technologies. These have created a transnational environment in which many different forms of cultural innovation are possible. No longer limited by geopolitical "places" or "homelands," social movements as different in their goals as Amnesty International and al Qaeda may both flourish in the "non-place" space of the Internet. Moreover, the expanding possibilities for the movement of people around the world have intensified global phenomena such as tourism and migration. These, and other, movements have been eloquently theorized by Arjun Appadurai as flowing through what he calls ethnoscaples, mediascapes, technoscapes, financescapes, and ideoscapes, which, according to him, are often in unpredictable disjuncture, pregnant with the possibility for creating new cultural forms. Although a bewildering number of human futures appear possible as a result of these developments, one thing does seem all but certain: such transformations are unlikely to slow down at any point in the near future. The same might therefore be said of globalization-oriented anthropology. Conceptually unfettered from assumptions about the effects of colonialism, with its tacit opposition of the Western to the non-Western world, and from the regional or national bias of earlier generations of anthropologists, the globalization perspective seems on track to expand the horizon of anthropological research well into the twenty-first century.

Public Anthropology

Key Words: applied anthropology, cultural resource management (CRM), eugenicist, Human Terrain System (HTS), ivory tower, museological, neoliberal economics, Pioneer Fund, public anthropology, pundit, truthy

The twenty-first century has witnessed a new (or renewed) approach to doing anthropology that is often set apart from its academic cousins on the grounds that it is applied, atheoretical, and constrained by “real world” considerations. While these characterizations are understandable, given the generally cloistered history of academic disciplines, they are also misleading. Contrasting themselves with applied anthropology, in which a sharp distinction is often drawn between “pure” scholarship and how it is used outside the “**ivory tower**,” a recent generation of anthropologists concerned with expanding the breadth of theory has written of **public anthropology** as a means of making their discipline relevant in the world beyond universities. The word “beyond” rather than “outside” is used deliberately. For the self-declared public anthropologist, scholars *both* within and outside the university system are part of a larger project that, as Trevor Purcell says, “directly and indirectly [contributes] to the general good—not just to the academic or career good.” Anthropologists conduct their daily lives “as the embodiment of sociopolitical participation.” They are, in this view, direct heirs to the postmodern controversy of the 1980s and 1990s during which, in Ben Feinberg’s enigmatic characterization, “debates within the discipline involved tearing at our own flesh and flaunting the sackcloth of self-doubt” while “we sparred with each other and devoured our elders in the hidden corners and footnotes of obscure journals.”

This call to action is not simply a new trend in how anthropologists manage their professional lives. If it were, discussion of public anthropology would not be justified in a volume about theory. The goal of scholars advocating a public orientation is more subtle than this, and it has deep implications for social and cultural epistemology. The question of who constitutes this “public” is central. The adjective does not refer simply to the wider world outside the hallowed halls of academia. Rather, the notion of what counts as public is set within the context both of “anthropology” as a distinctive historical product and event within Western scholarship and of

anthropologists as distinctive agents in the formation and propagation of knowledge about human beings. Anthropologists have now recognized and “owned up to” the discipline’s role in (among other things) supporting colonialism, justifying ethnocentrism, and reifying differences between the sexes.

It seems clear that, at the very least, twenty-first-century anthropologists will no longer be uncritical of their own biases and assumptions. Instead, the globalizing world of free markets, homogenizing popular culture, and technorationalizing industry to which *all* are rapidly, if differently, becoming witness places anthropologists and anthropology squarely within a network of global movements, debates, and conversations. They are, in other words, part of the public—not elevated above it as lofty observers. It is in their capacity as members of the public that they participate, bringing the professional skills and critical insights of anthropology to the wider world. Rather than submit to professional imperatives that buy “respectability” and “esteem” by acceding to careerism (for example, by jumping the many hoops of the tenure system) and unspoken assumptions about the authoritative status of doctorates and the professoriate, anthropologists, as those promoting a public orientation assert, must come down from Olympus to wallow in the lived and eminently political struggles of their erstwhile subjects—now peers and no longer the mere objects of their scrutiny. Consequently, to the holy grail of positivist science Robert Borofsky extends the following olive branch: objectivity, he writes, is to be found “less in the pronouncement of authorities than in the conversation among concerned parties.”

So what does this mean, exactly, for the work of anthropologists seeking to cultivate a “public” orientation? It means, first of all, that the work of the anthropologist must disdain all notion of objectivity and distance, putting into practice those principles advanced in the canons of postmodern, feminist, and globalization theory. In practical terms, realizing this ideal involves recognizing that anthropologists are neither unbiased nor dispassionate observers, *nor should they be*. Public anthropology proposes that anthropologists, like any other sector of society, are morally and ethically accountable for the subjects of their study, a responsibility that cannot simply be wished away by laying claim to the old chestnuts of objectivity and relativism. To the contrary, anthropologists must by definition be activists and interventionists—seeking, as Karl Marx once observed in a critique of philosophy, to change rather than merely interpret the world. They must bring

their expertise and skill to the public and political arenas of popular (that is, accessible) writing, community action, and policy formation, as well as to the “traditional” areas of applied research: the medical, corporate, **museological**, and **cultural resource management (CRM)** sectors. While anthropologists have of course “doubled” as activists for generations (within American anthropology, Franz Boas and Margaret Mead are conspicuous examples), anthropological theory itself has seldom if ever been scrutinized in this way, save in the wishful musings of prescient scholars such as Sherry Ortner, who in her (now) classic 1984 essay on the history of anthropology advocates for a practice-oriented approach in which such binaries as theory and action are reconsidered. The public anthropologist is not the “opposite” of the academic anthropologist but a public intellectual engaged in important debates and controversies of concrete significance for the world in which he or she lives.

One main difference, then, between applied and public anthropology is that the latter in a sense calls upon a far greater commitment on the part of researchers. Ironically, this focus has sometimes put public anthropologists at odds with other applied or “practising” anthropologists. Many of these, especially those trained in the more positivistic or quantitatively oriented branches of the discipline, retain a sense that anthropologists are scientists in search of objective knowledge. Precisely because it insists that moral and ethical accountability is part of the anthropological enterprise by definition, public anthropology calls into question venerable canons of method. While many (but not all) sociocultural anthropologists have long been accustomed to interrogating the interpretive and subjective aspects of their practice, many biological and archaeological anthropologists have not, paving the way for a fresh rift between the subfields over questions of method, epistemology, and purpose. It is important to note that while these trends exist and persist, many positivist anthropologists do acknowledge responsibility to their subjects in many official and unofficial ways, even while stopping short of embracing the revolution in theoretical perspective called for by public anthropology.

To date, most forays into public anthropology take a much more traditional route: publishing. A volume edited by Catherine Besteman and Hugh Gusterson is a good example. In *Why America's Top Pundits Are Wrong: Anthropologists Talk Back* (2005), Besteman and Gusterson (b. 1959) invite readers to reconsider the role of the **pundit** in American society. The authors show that popular and populist writers, journalists, and on-air personalities do not so much engage in meaningful examination of

controversial issues as reproduce simplistic and long-cherished notions about social and cultural evolution, biological determinism, the timelessness of traditional society, and the intractable character of ethnic and religious animosities. That such ideas have long since been refuted in anthropological writing is itself evidence, they argue, that the scholarly community has involved itself far too little in cultivating a more nuanced perspective among the wider public. In what amounts to a continuation of colonial practice, the world's powers treat developing and war-torn states as unruly children who will only "mature" through the firm and benevolent hand of Western-style democracy, **neoliberal economics**, and military coercion. Seemingly outside this process, well-known pundits and public intellectuals are mythmakers who persuade by providing their positions with the veneer of scientism—an elite discourse in which readers are invited to participate and which offers sure cognitive "satisfaction" by virtue of its paint-by-numbers explanations. Certain kinds of experts who have marshalled particular bodies of "facts" receive copious funding from politically and socially conservative organizations while, in the absence of such support, dissenting viewpoints recede into the horizon. By way of example, Besteman and Gusterson cite the well-known 1994 study *The Bell Curve*, by Richard J. Herrnstein and Charles Murray, in which intelligence among the American public is treated as the outcome of differential gene distribution. Left unsaid, much of the funding for hereditarian studies such as this is supplied from the coffers of formerly **eugenicist** organizations such as New York's **Pioneer Fund**. Objectivity, empirical validation, and truth thus become the products of ideological jostling and the politics of knowledge. According to faux pundit Stephen Colbert's withering satire, the "knowledge" deriving from such studies is not so much truth as "**truthy**." Public anthropologists, the authors maintain, can play an important role in distinguishing the truth from the truthy, the inclusively scientific from the exclusively mythological. Indeed, if anthropologists are to descend from their ivory towers to inhabit the conflicted world of subjects and objects, they have an obligation to do so.

While there are many instances of public engagement within contemporary anthropology, few have attracted as much debate as the application of ethnographic and other social scientific methods to counterinsurgency operations in areas where the United States and its allies have fought wars, most recently in Afghanistan and Iraq. In particular, a United States army initiative called the **Human Terrain System (HTS)**

(2007–15) was a lightning rod for heated debate and in many cases hyperbolic rhetoric. While the goals and means of HTS were almost certainly in flux since its inception, its professed ambition was to “win the hearts and minds” by deploying into theatres of war a corps of social scientists (not exclusively anthropologists) whose primary purpose was to carry out “operationally relevant socio-cultural research and analysis.” Less prosaically, the program attempted to forge understanding and cooperation between local peoples and the United States military. In this way, it was hoped, the potentially devastating effects of miscommunication and the “collateral damage” it brings might be avoided. At its core, the assumption behind HTS was that solid appreciation for and knowledge of cross-cultural difference hold the key to defusing some elements of conflict in war zones. In the program, pre-deployment soldiers and civilian workers received several months of training on topics such as regional culture, social-scientific method and theory, and regional language. Often, these men and women had little or no prior education in such topics prior to entering the program. While quantifying the effects of this training has been difficult, advocates insist that the program forged at least some level of mutual respect between United States soldiers and the peoples with whom they interacted while deployed, and—more to the point—that it mitigated avoidable civilian casualties and other harmful events.

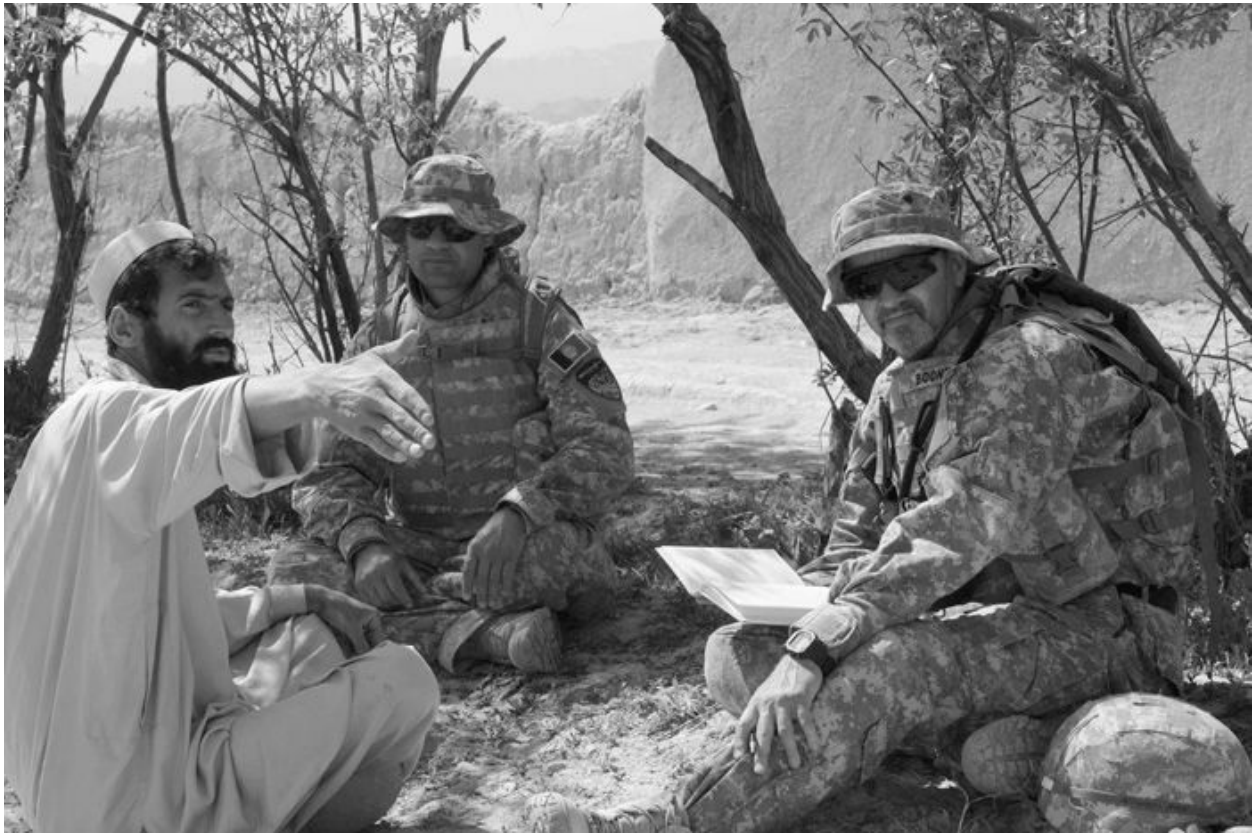


FIGURE 4.4 Social Science on the Front Line: In April 2010, psychologist and Human Terrain System (HTS) member Dr. Richard R. Boone interviews local residents of the Baraki District in Afghanistan's Logar province to find out about their daily lives. Anthropologist members of the HTS performed similar functions.

Photograph by Staff Sgt. Donald Reeves. Image courtesy of DVIDS.

Not surprisingly however, the HTS program endured a firestorm of withering criticism from many within the anthropological establishment who dismissed it as a cynical tool of neocolonialism. These critics argued that HTS provided cover and even legitimacy for espionage operations that contravened basic ethical obligations among anthropologists to do no harm to one's fieldwork respondents. They argued with some justification that the United States military establishment and intelligence agencies have a track record of manipulating social science for purposes that have little or nothing to do with assisting indigenous people or learning about other cultures. It is a matter of public record that during the time of the HTS program there were indeed examples of abject failure—from allegations of entrenched sexism

and criminal behaviour to the tragic and perhaps avoidable deaths of HTS members in the line of duty. Yet supporters point out that such failures cast into sharp relief the need for a civilian academic establishment to engage more deeply with military and intelligence agencies in order to help avoid such tragedies. To withdraw one's expertise and willingness to engage in dialogue with the military, Department of State, and Department of Defense, such reasoning goes, is tantamount to throwing in the towel: an admission of failure to inform how American foreign policy is designed and implemented. Some among the program's defenders argue that to withhold anthropological insight and perspective from deploying soldiers is to simultaneously perpetuate a dearth of basic cross-cultural knowledge among soldiers and to uphold an elitist order of American society, in which some enjoy the moral rectitude and status of cultural critics while less fortunate others "get their hands dirty."

In this brief discussion of the HTS controversy, it is impossible to resolve what are perhaps intractable issues. A more germane question for the purposes of this book is whether or not HTS was a good example of public anthropology. Certainly, it sought to be **applied anthropology**—but this is not necessarily the same thing. The infusion of concern over ethical standards and goals within anthropology and the engagement of anthropologists with the public sphere are what drive this and other controversies yet to come. How may the discipline reasonably respond to conflicting imperatives?

On the one hand, anthropology's shared cornerstones of cultural relativism and commitments to transparency and to the welfare and interests of field informants would seem to preclude putting anthropologists' skills and training in the service of institutions that do not always share these goals. There is also great value in preserving anthropology's traditional independence as a source of cultural observation and criticism. On the other hand, for anthropology to have any role in the generation and promotion of public policy, especially in the domain of national defence and war, many believe that the discipline must be a part of the process and not stand aloof—willing to criticize but unwilling to engage. HTS might not have been indispensable to such a role, but if not, what could or should this engagement look like? If anthropologists and other academics are indeed accountable to the "public," which public do they serve? Mainstream American opinion? The cloistered and often arcane public of the anthropology profession? The sundry publics of field research (who often care little about ethnographic

ambitions)? How do anthropologists thread this needle? This brief foray into what has become something of an ethical quagmire should serve to illustrate just how far from cut and dried such issues can be, and consequently how difficult a meaningful public anthropology is to construct.

World Traditions in Anthropology

The turn toward a more introspective and self-critical discipline has had a number of consequences for how the history of anthropology is theorized and presented, in classrooms, textbooks, and elsewhere. One of the more significant lacunae (made more so by its retrospectively obvious “elephant in the room” quality) has been the near absence in the “mainstream” discipline of non-Western anthropologies as a focus for discussion. More precisely, the field of social and cultural anthropology has been saturated with perspectives and theoretical orientations derived largely from the distinctively national traditions of Anglo-North America, France, and to some extent Germany (by way of Max Weber’s latter-day influence and Franz Boas’s espousal of ethnological neo-Kantianism). While it is well known among scholars that other schools and orientations exist (for instance, in Russia, Japan, India, and Brazil), awareness of these has been generally slow to develop. Even their very existence tends to be muted in journals and monographs where the work of anthropological “Others” has been largely a question of footnotes and other *de rigueur* citations. How are we to explain the absence of this body of scholarship from disciplinary discourse, and more importantly, what steps can be taken to integrate alternative national traditions into the fold of a global, non-parochial anthropology?

The English Language and Anglo-American Hegemony

Key Words: anglocentrism, G.I. Bill, world anthropologies

To begin, it is important to remember that language plays a crucial role in making any discourse (academic or otherwise) accessible. While a comprehensive account of the twentieth-century ascendancy of Anglo-American English is well beyond the scope of this book, it is clear that the emergence of English as the international language of commerce, diplomacy, media, popular entertainment, and scholarship has been a significant factor in elevating the profile of specifically British- or American-rooted anthropologies to more conspicuous positions relative to other national or non-Western traditions. This elevation has also to some extent encompassed “peripheral” states such as Canada, Australia, South Africa, Kenya, and

India, where English is either one or the only official language. What we might call **a nglocentrism** continues in the present day and is made possible by international geopolitics and cultural globalization in which the English language has assumed a pivotal position in directing international public tastes, patterns of economic consumption, and ideas about prestige. Furthermore, use of a common language has made it possible for students and professionals hailing from Britain, the United States, and the British Commonwealth to attend or work in colleges and universities on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean, thus deepening and strengthening relations within anglophone anthropology, too often to the exclusion of other varieties. In sum, and as globally relevant as they remain in other respects, Russian, Spanish, Portuguese, Japanese, Chinese, and a host of more regional tongues remain at the linguistic periphery of anthropological theory and research.

Another important factor in the unequal emergence of **world anthropologies** concerns the expansion of the North American academy itself. In the United States, a growing manufacturing economy after 1945, combined with an unprecedented demand for post-secondary education (driven by the **G.I. Bill**, which made college-level education accessible to returning veterans), made the United States the site of a burgeoning academic industry. Compared with a handful of private colleges and universities early in the twentieth century, in 2016 there were over 4,500 institutions of higher education in the United States and approximately another 100 in Canada. This efflorescence has made it possible to expand both the numbers of degree-granting departments and the ranks of professional anthropologists. From the late 1940s, older doctorate-granting universities were thus in a position to graduate many more “fresh” anthropologists in the secure knowledge that there would be academic positions awaiting these students in an ever-expanding web of regional and state university systems. As one might expect, this has been something of a self-reinforcing cycle in which an increase in the number of professional anthropologists has influenced the proliferation of programs granting doctoral and master’s degrees. Eventually, even the sheer volume of North American academic institutions has not been enough to absorb the number of professional-level anthropologists, many thousands of whom have subsequently looked to make anthropology “relevant” outside academia (an evolution that stimulated interest in public anthropology). It might even be argued that this expanding web of anthropological training and practice gave rise to a distinctively North

American understanding of the postmodern condition: more practitioners across more departments have resulted in an increased fragmentation of professional interests, theoretical orientations, and applications. In North America, this situation has doubtless been stimulated by the history of a four-field approach in many if not most anthropology departments. In sum, the political economy of anthropological training and practice in North America, combined with the ascendancy of English as the primary medium of instruction, debate, and publishing, has generated a status quo of centre and margins from which escape has proven difficult.

Existing within, but in some sense apart from, the Anglo-American dynamic, French anthropology has been extraordinarily influential in the domain of theoretical innovation. In this volume, for instance, much discussion has already been devoted to the stature and influence of such luminaries as Émile Durkheim, Marcel Mauss, Ferdinand de Saussure, Claude Lévi-Strauss, Michel Foucault, and Pierre Bourdieu. The work of these scholars, only two of whom (Lévi-Strauss and Bourdieu) may be considered anthropologists in the narrow sense of the term, has been profound in the English-speaking world. In particular, Durkheim's perspective was hugely influential on British social anthropology in the early and mid-twentieth century in spite of the deep linguistic divide separating practitioners. In turn, Lévi-Strauss's structuralism—considered by many, even following its *dénouement*, to be the most important body of distinctively anthropological theory in the twentieth century—was built on an intellectual edifice erected by Durkheim. Though long out of fashion, this structuralism continues to thrive as a rallying point or lightning rod, depending on one's point of view. Informed by Durkheim, French structuralism was incorporated into both British and American traditions by way of such well-known anthropologists as Edmund Leach and Marshall Sahlins, both of whom put their own stamp on the idea of cultural structures of logic and reasoning.

The influence of French anthropology, like other non-English varieties, has been greatly constrained by a dearth of translation. Although structuralism had been known in France since the late 1950s, for instance, it only became “fashionable” in the English-speaking world with the translation of Lévi-Strauss's work beginning in the late 1960s and carrying on through the mid-1970s. While Foucault's books were in some cases available in translation two or three years following their original publication in French, his full influence in anthropology came only during the 1980s—a fact that

may speak to differences in style of exegesis and writing between French- and English-speaking social scientists. Translation of works by lesser-known scholars has been far less easy to come by. One influential exception to this pattern was *Deadly Words: Witchcraft in the Bocage*, by Jeanne Favret-Saada (b. 1934), which emerged in English translation in 1980, a scant three years following its original 1977 publication in French as *Les mots, la mort, les sorts*. This book is remarkable for being a welcome exception to an otherwise frustrating state of affairs. Happily, in recent years initiatives have taken root within the American Anthropological Association and other professional bodies with the goal of providing translations of non-English monographs for dissemination in the English-speaking world. A notable example to emerge recently is *The Land of Remorse: A Study of Southern Italian Tarantism*, by Ernesto De Martino (1908–65)—an anthropologist considered central to the emergence of anthropology in Italy. That the original Italian work, published in 1961 as *La Terra Del Rimorso*, did not appear in English for over 40 years should give us pause. Interestingly, if not surprisingly, the reverse process—translation from English to non-English—has been far more prevalent, even when the works in question are of more modest stature. Some years ago, for instance, we noticed the translation of an early edition of this book into modern Greek.

“Other” Anthropologies

Key Word: Russian social anthropology

Early in the twenty-first century, it is fair to say that anthropology exists in some shape or form in dozens of nation-states around the world. This does not necessarily imply that anthropology departments per se exist in all countries, but it is clear that professional anthropologists, many of whom received their training in North America or Europe, are employed within academic departments and colleges across a range of social science and humanities programs. This body of professionals does not include the many who work in state agencies, the public sector, and the private sector. With respect to anthropological theory and schools of thought, there are also a number of distinctive approaches that have lingered at the margins of mainstream anthropology, in some cases for decades. While any enumeration of these here is necessarily limited if not perfunctory, a few deserve mention

for their past or present relevance in social and cultural research.

In Europe, a number of less well-known perspectives have coexisted with the British, French, and German “metropolitan” traditions. Occasionally, one or more of these have risen to popularity within mainstream anthropological theory. Notable among them has been Norwegian Fredrik Barth’s transactional perspective, often referred to as methodological individualism or “generative” anthropology. Barth’s approach stands out because it inaugurated a distinctively Norwegian strand of anthropological theory that enjoyed some measure of success in the English-speaking anthropology community, particularly in the 1970s and 1980s. It is significant, however, that all of Barth’s major works were originally published in English, making them immediately available to English-speaking anthropologists. Other European varieties of anthropology include significant research undertaken by Dutch, Italian, Serbian, Bulgarian, Czech, Polish, and Russian anthropologists. Some among this group of scholars, notably those hailing from the Netherlands and Russia (which we must historically connect to the former Soviet Union), have pedigrees of research related to colonialism, much as do the United Kingdom and France. Unlike the British and French traditions, however, scholars from these nations do not generally have a lengthy track record of English-language publication—at least not to such a degree as to give them widespread influence in the anglocentric anthropological community.

Russian anthropology represents something of a distinctive case, in that it comprises both a large body of scholarship with a lengthy pedigree, overlaps with but is in many ways alien to European cultural patterns, and for generations embodied an overtly nomothetic research template in the form of Marxism, or dialectical materialism. In some ways, it is something of a conceit—if not an outright mischaracterization—to attribute marginality to a branch of the discipline as well developed as anthropology under the Soviets. The political and economic power of the Soviet Union through much of the twentieth century provided a context within which generations of Russian scholars sought to align ethnographic data with Marxist evolutionary theory. While the ideological foundations of Marxist reasoning have long since been discarded within Western anthropological circles, the influence of Marx’s work has been profound in such schools as structural Marxism and cultural materialism. In the twenty-first century, materialism and the power relations among antagonistic social classes and groups have continued to attract

interest, even as the overly constraining elements of structure are themselves jettisoned. In post-Soviet Russia, practitioners are seeking to redefine what it means to do **Russian social anthropology** over and against the Soviet ethnological tradition, and it remains to be seen whether cross-pollination and dialogue between East and West will take root.

Japan represents an interesting case in which a national tradition of anthropological research coexists with a history of engagement by Western anthropologists interested in studying the exotica of a non-Western civilization. Within Japan itself, many Western anthropologists carry out extensive ethnographic research on a great variety of foci (everything from deaf culture to baseball to rap music), much of which is disseminated in English-language monographs and journals. How much of this body of work dovetails with “indigenous” anthropology carried out by Japanese anthropologists is an open question, as is how to characterize the theoretical orientations of Japanese researchers working in Africa, Europe, China, and former Japanese colonies in East Asia, among other locations. From the perspective of theory, Japanese anthropology would seem to have internalized a current Western focus on the study of modernity both at home and abroad, but any distinctively Japanese features of this theme have yet to be introduced to anglophone (or other) readers, due once again to a general absence of translation. As anthropologist Kaori Sugishita has pointed out in the *Other People's Anthropologies* (2010) anthology, this pattern mimics a wider and unquestioning interest among Japanese to “join the West” in terms of economic wealth and power.

Africa and Latin America present cases where distinctive varieties of anthropological theory have yet to blossom, although ethnographic and other anthropological research has of course been conducted in both regions for many decades. Unlike the Russian or Soviet case, but similar to the Japanese, most African national anthropologists working south of the Sahara Desert (Northern Africa represents something of a different case, in anthropology as in many things) are trained in metropolitan centres in Europe and North America. In Africa, many anthropologists employ English or French as their primary languages of research dissemination and teaching. The great majority of scholars working in these regions have been foreign nationals, although the tide is slowly turning in this regard, particularly in Kenya and South Africa—a postcolonial state with a better economic and educational infrastructure than elsewhere. Clearly, constraints placed on research and

travel budgets place many African anthropologists in the unenviable position of having limited options. The same is true in Central and South America. Spanish and Portuguese remain marginal languages in global anthropology, and while there are a number of peer-reviewed journals and publishers that cater to their work, it remains the case that in order to disseminate research, publication in English is necessary even when undesirable.

The forgoing is necessarily a mere sketch of where things stand with the many “other anthropologies” that continue to take shape around the world. It remains to be seen whether local languages and theoretical orientations may be drawn into a pluralistic and cosmopolitan network of multi-sited anthropologies, in which dialogue and the sharing of perspective are no longer limited by language and economic factors.

Anthropologies of the Digital Age

Key Words: analog, binary coding, cybernetics, digital, Dot Com collapse, link-up, modernization theory, Silicon Valley, Silicon Valley Cultures Project, Web 2.0, World of Warcraft, Y2K

Anthropological theorists in the early twenty-first century are increasingly turning their attention to powerful cultural and technological currents that have come, in a staggeringly brief period of time, to engulf the entire world (albeit more unevenly than many might assume). We refer to this advent and explosion, taking place roughly since the late 1970s, as the “digital age.”

The term “**digital**” is itself interesting, as, in the words of Heather Horst and Daniel Miller (b. 1954), it “seems to have become a discursive catchall for novelty.” That is, the word has transcended its origins as a technical reference to embrace not only a vast array of innovations, but also a certain cultural world view that anticipates new and unprecedented developments and their intimate connection to the fabric of everyday life. Strictly speaking, however, the word is defined as “everything that has been developed by, or can be reduced to, the binary—that is bits consisting of 0s and 1s.” The discovery and application of **binary coding** in the mid-twentieth century signalled a radical transformation in the possibilities for information and communications technologies. Among the first anthropological students of **cybernetics** technology was Claude Lévi-Strauss, who sought early in his career to articulate the mathematical models of 1950s’ computer technologies to his evolving perspective on culture. It can be reasonably inferred that Lévi-Strauss’s particular contribution to anthropological theory—French structuralism—drew many of its assumptions about rationality and systematicity from the first awakenings of the digital age. Of course, this period witnessed the emergence of many new and sophisticated technologies—most of which were used by government and military institutions (those pondered by Lévi-Strauss, for instance, were employed in the development of missile guidance systems) and only a few of which (notably **analog** television) became part of the daily rituals of domestic life—and then only for affluent peoples of Western societies.

It has only been in the past 30 or 40 years that the everyday worlds, first of millions and eventually of literally billions, have been dramatically

affected by the tools and possibilities of digital technologies—especially by way of the personal computer in its various evolutions, together with the powerful software technologies that made these possible. These have been followed by Personal Digital Assistants (such as the Palm Pilot), cellphones, pagers, tablets, smartphones, and gaming consoles.

But perhaps more important than the cultural artifacts themselves (smartphones, computers, tablets, etc.), and casting a long shadow over worldwide social and cultural practices, has been the Internet—the ubiquitous global system of digital networks that in just a few short years has become vital to every modern industry, state, and economy; this is especially true in terms of the staggering reach of social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter (in 2015, Facebook reported some 1.5 billion active users around the world). The power and reach of such technologies to create, sustain, and transform social and cultural worlds cannot be overstated. The rapid emergence—and just as rapid obsolescence—of these and a host of other devices has been driven by new markets of consumers the world over; this in turn has spawned a variety of new industries and made household names of such figures as Bill Gates (b. 1955), Steve Jobs (1955–2011), and Mark Zuckerberg (b. 1984). yet, notwithstanding Lévi-Strauss’s early interest, anthropological theory has been generally slow to engage them. This sluggishness is now beginning to fade, as we discuss in this section.

In a 2010 essay, Gabriella Coleman reviewed the multifarious, yet tentative, ways in which ethnographers began in the early 1990s to study digital culture. Much early interest was stimulated by the heady and even utopian predictions concerning the “brave new world” of digital power, synergy, and “endless possibilities” that accompany the universal availability of such tools. With hindsight, Coleman reflects that these ideas and the florid language that so often was used to describe them suggest deeply rooted notions of “rupture” and “transformation.” They represent a break with the pre-modern, analog order and the ushering in of a better, more unified transnational order. We note, too, that this utopianism had a dark underbelly of apocalypticism, as exemplified by the “[Y2K](#)” (Year 2000) panic of 1998–99, in which certain dire consequences were forecast in anticipation of global digital technology’s inability to distinguish the year “2000” from the year “1900.” Real technological issues, soon resolved, were swamped by an imaginary of global catastrophe and breakdown in law and order that never materialized.

The failure of Y2K to produce catastrophe, followed in short order by the **D ot Com collapse** of 2000 (in which many of the innumerable and ostensibly profitable online companies to emerge in the 1990s lost some or all of their value in what is generally likened to the bursting of a bubble), took some of the lustre off the rosy predictions of an imminently better world. What had been an almost axiomatic certainty that the digital age would inevitably and mechanistically improve the lives of millions or billions across a range of domains (education, economy, and medicine, to name the most obvious) came under sharp scrutiny. Still, interest rose once again as new, more powerful devices and Internet platforms came online in the mid-2000s. The advent of what has been styled “**Web 2.0**”—consisting of user-created Internet activity such as wikis, blogs, YouTube, and various forms of social media (especially Facebook)—combined with greatly enhanced possibilities in mobile technology and file-sharing (the many guises of smartphone and tablet, especially, together with digital music platforms such as iTunes) produces a diverse range of possibilities in the use of digital culture. But this digital culture is also highly susceptible to abuse: the so-called Dark Net is a “digital underground” consisting of tens of thousands of sites run by various criminal enterprises, sex offenders, terrorists and political extremists, and drug traffickers, among others. If anything, these uses and abuses are not abating but continue to expand.

Returning to the 1990s, it was in the context of emerging technologies whose powers and limits were unknown that there arose a division of labour among anthropologists in relation to digital culture. According to Coleman, some prominent theorists (including Arjun Appadurai and Arturo Escobar [b. 1952]) turned their gaze to the “cultural implications” of digital media, while a small number of others began to conceive ethnographic research on the various economic, political, and cultural movements in the blossoming online world (much of this latter focus tried to investigate the online proliferation of anthropological knowledge in the form of website and virtual displays of various kinds).

Among the former, one important strain of thought involved the critique of what was perceived as hyperbole in popular culture: the granting of “autonomous power to technology to engender change” when it seemed just as likely that such tools might mediate and “facilitate social reproduction.” Faye Ginsburg (b. 1952), for instance, has argued that widespread discourses lauding the transformative power of digital technologies solidify notions of a

profound “digital divide” in which there are “haves” and “have-nots” on a global scale. In so styling the digital age, she argues, such simplistic claims rehearse (sometimes unwittingly, but generally on purpose) older ideas about the need for modernization of the non-modern world. Digital power, in this wise, is but another strand of global international development and **modernization theory** which, as many anthropologists have argued, tends to assume a unilineal trajectory of progress from the pre-modern, preindustrial, preliterate, and (perhaps) pre-civilized to a better world—as patronizingly defined by the standards and values of Western industrial democracies. This pre-modern is, the reasoning goes, in need of assistance not merely to catch up in terms of industry, medicine, or education, but also to be better adapted to the digital age now consuming the world. As Ginsburg reminds us, however, this myopic vantage is erected on the flawed, yet pervasive, assumption that the digital age inevitably produces a “shared subjectivity” or “whole new sensorium” in which the lives of vast swathes of cultural others are improved.

From among those anthropologists who have produced research that looks at digital technology in context, a variety of ethnographic studies have emerged. Frequently, these illuminate the processes by which technology is “provincialized” to distinctive cultural worlds. As Coleman puts it, such studies show how digital media become “central to the articulation of cherished beliefs, ritual practices, and modes of being in the world.” In short, digital technology is made to fit existing forms and institutions, and not the other way around.

By way of example, Horst and Miller have written of the 1990s’ rise of the cellphone in Jamaica. In their 2006 book *The Cell Phone: An Anthropology of Communication*, they show how the society adapted this new tool to its own needs and values over the course of a scant few years. The rural community of Orange Valley, for example, went from having very few phones at all (the few that existed were landlines in the homes of affluent residents) to witnessing large numbers of individuals across all economic classes carrying phones in their pockets. In this multi-sited study, the authors show how the technical ability to store large numbers of cellphone numbers on one’s phone permits an exploitation of economic and social connections that were desirable, but next to impossible, prior to the wide availability of inexpensive cellphones. For young women in particular, the phenomenon of the “**link-up**” is a means of securing financial assistance from a variety of

sources (young men, primarily) and of ensuring ready connection to some family members (“cousins” and “aunties”) and children. With regard to the latter, the new connectivities enabled by cellphones foster a more direct way of accessing child care and child rearing—much of which is done by female relatives other than “baby-mothers.” In this context then, cellphones mediate “coping strategies”—particularly with the goal among low-income families (the majority of study participants) of making ends meet by asking (“begging” in Jamaican patois) for money and other favours for which reciprocity is not necessarily expected.

Other studies are interesting for the way in which they probe groups who, as Coleman says, “can and do culturally dwell in digital technology.” These formations follow different developmental trajectories, but anthropologists have been keenly interested in two: the prosaic work environments and cultures of digital labour, and virtual communities of shared cultural practice.

A good example of the former is J.A. English-Lueck’s long-term study of the cultural worlds fashioned by software designers, engineers, and other high-tech professionals in Northern California’s **Silicon Valley**, a location increasingly mythologized (rightly or wrongly) in popular American culture as a digital Garden of Eden. Her ethnographic writing is itself an outgrowth of the **Silicon Valley Cultures Project**—an initiative begun by faculty at San Jose State University in the early 1990s to longitudinally study and document the cultural effects of the region’s emerging digital industries. Published in 2002, English-Lueck’s book, *Cultures@SiliconValley*, explores high-tech workers’ use of technology in creative and diverse ways to generate flexible networks of social practice that blur the sharp distinctions between such separately imagined spaces as those of the workplace and home. In these technologically “saturated” spaces, the various digital devices and communications platforms are culturally styled as part of everyday life management across different domains, from inter-employee hierarchies to marital relationships and childcare. Her 2010 ethnography *Being and Well-Being: Health and the Working Bodies of Silicon Valley* probes still more deeply into the everyday worlds of Silicon Valley workers. Here, English-Lueck skirts the digital per se in order to examine the extent to which the high-tech workplace cultivates subjective concern for health and health care. Individuals are tasked with their own health as “projects,” in emulation of the “project management” culture characteristic of the new economic environment (of which the industries of Silicon Valley are emblematic).

With respect to research that evokes digital culture in its most abstract sense, Bonnie A. Nardi's 2010 ethnography *My Life as A Night Elf Priest: An Anthropological Account of World of Warcraft* exemplifies anthropological fascination with virtual worlds that are simultaneously material and transcendent. Nardi's study investigates the culture of a massive online role-playing game— **World of Warcraft** (WoW)—that boasts a “population” of over 11 million regular players. She proposes that this virtual world can best be understood by way of American philosopher John Dewey's (1859–1952) theory of pragmatism, according to which human aesthetics are cultivated through engagement with the world (rather than through contemplation of abstractions such as truth and beauty). For Nardi, this world is “a powerful visual experience like viewing a striking landscape.” World of Warcraft, in this sense, is an aesthetically rich domain open to rule-governed intervention by active agents (American and Chinese players) who import both their ingenuity and bias (such as misogyny) into the game's fantastic digital landscapes and interactions. The often-posed question about “addiction” (“problematic use,” as Nardi terms it) in relation to video games is dispelled in reframing the game as an alternative aesthetic experience to such “real”-world possibilities as sports, historical re-enactment, and dance—which, Nardi argues, are of limited accessibility to many WoW gamers in the sense that they offer no similar experience of mastery.

Studies such as Horst and Miller's, English-Lueck's, and Nardi's illustrate an idea that Horst and Miller elaborate in another book, *Digital Anthropology* (2012): that digital technologies “intensify” an already powerful dialectic between globalizing forces for cultural homogeneity and the explosive proliferation and diversification of “particularities.” The transnational political economy of digital power is the broad context in which Jamaican access to technology is played out, but its fusion with everyday forms of value embeds the digital world in a specific matrix of social relations over which Jamaicans exert control. In contrast, the social hierarchies, employee inequities, work requirements, and theories of health and illness in Silicon Valley suggest profound effects of technology-as-workplace over which employees have only partial control. In even sharper contrast, the unfettered subjective agency of the virtual play in World of Warcraft evokes a parallel universe of aesthetic value no less compelling and “real” than those of the material world.

The irony in this emerging universality of digital culture—that an

irreducible binary of 0s and 1s produces apparently limitless particularity—is a tension that anthropologists have little choice but to navigate. Though common sense suggests that the universal and the particular reside at the opposite poles of some abstract measuring stick, it seems closer to the truth to say that in the context of the digital age, they interpolate each other in a paradoxical fashion: the more universally pervasive the binary system becomes, the more fragmented are its manifestations.

Moreover, Horst and Miller also propose that there is a deceptive quality of the “intermediate” that is frequently associated with digital technologies in that these appear to constitute a “buffer” between human beings and “authentic” and/or pre-digital culture. Anthropologists are admonished never to romanticize the “prehistoric” analog by attributing to it a more primordial human authenticity. Indeed, it is to the analysis of such widely dispersed narratives (in the vein of “things were so much easier and less complicated before this technology”) that anthropologists must turn in order to shed light on the “framed” and constructed character of cultural meaning in relation to a new era of digital technologies.

Horst and Miller suggest other important considerations for a more powerful anthropology of the digital age—ones that tie it directly to very traditional principles of anthropological theory. First, they urge a renewed attention to holism. As they see it, much of the literature in popular culture, media studies, and even anthropology has been overly reductive in viewing digital culture through too narrow a lens. Studies that ignore the holistic entanglements between digital practice and such institutionalized abstractions as economy, kinship, and religion miss something essential about the contextualized making of digital culture.

Second, they propose that the principle of cultural relativism has great relevance for an anthropology of the digital age. Thus, it makes little sense to regard globalization of the digital as a homogenizing force when many studies (such as the Jamaican cellphone study) suggest the deep effects of cultural difference on how and why digital technologies are used. We should recognize, therefore, that many digital cultures stoke diversity and proliferation by giving “voice and visibility to those who are peripheralized by modernist and similar perspectives.” From this vantage, widely held assumptions regarding the ineffable homogenizing power of digital technologies to “bring the world together” all but ignore the fact that new digital worlds embody a wide range of culture-specific values, attitudes,

practices, and assumptions.

The effort to fully appreciate the power of this dialectic leads Horst and Miller to reflect on the human capacity to abstract in principle. If one were to historicize this ability, they suggest, one could see that the digital age marks but the latest chapter in a drive toward abstracting value and meaning. Money, for instance, has long been subject to this type of cultural overdetermination—it is intensely abstract, deterritorialized, quantitative, and distant from the personal. In sum, it is “alienated” from the conditions of labour, as Marx and Engels might say. The advent of the digital is reminiscent of this historical development. Like money, the digital saturates—it “produces too much culture” and threatens to overwhelm. It seems at once everywhere and nowhere in particular, pervasive yet not tangible. This “brave new world” and the anxieties it produces are one source of the tendency to romanticize the pre-digital. Happily for anthropologists, this process merges easily into hotly politicized debates over such issues as copyright, intellectual property, and file-sharing. These in turn provoke still deeper questions about online openness and freedom, as well as their inverse: the closed and controlled.

Of course, as with money, one cannot put the proverbial “cat back in the bag,” and it appears likely that (short of an apocalyptic event) humanity will never be able to revert to a pre-digital world. For the extent to which this is true, anthropologists will doubtless have rich subject matter in the investigation of digital culture for many years to come.

Conclusion

Key Words: secularization theory, Umma, weapons of mass destruction

In a 2002 letter to a Toronto newspaper, Wade Davis (b. 1953)—a Harvard-trained anthropologist, ethnobotanist, and prolific writer who works mainly outside the academic anthropological mainstream—reflected on the pervasive and, from his perspective, pernicious impact of Western economic and political expansion on the world’s impoverished nations. Subsequently reprinted in Roberto González’s 2004 edited volume *Anthropologists in the Public Sphere*, Davis’s letter cautioned that unless the currently unbridled steamroller of capitalist expansion is curbed, the al Qaeda attacks on the United States of September 11, 2001, might likely prove to be the tip of an abysmal iceberg, and “the chaotic conditions of disintegration and disenfranchisement,” so characteristic of the developing world, might be expected to continue breeding hatred of Western peoples and lifeways. Two American wars and some years later, Davis’s words seem prophetic, although not necessarily in the way he might have intended. The profound upheavals of a Middle Eastern and North African “Arab Spring” that began in 2010 suggest that the same peoples taken by many Americans in the wake of 9/11 to be very different from them are perhaps not so different after all. The targets of these revolutions have not been “infidel” Westerners in North America and Western Europe, but despotic regimes at home. The thus-far-failed revolution in Syria, together with the emergence of the so-called Islamic State (a reassertion of war against the West) in Syria and Iraq, the subsequent upheaval across the Muslim world, and, more recently, the geopolitical interventions of Russia and Turkey in this region complicate an already immensely complicated environment. Can anthropology help us to make sense of these changes that are of such ongoing significance for the world we all share?

In some ways, Davis’s letter was iconic of the new interest in promoting anthropology in the public sphere as a socially relevant field of knowledge. That is, he brought anthropological insight to the critical issues of our times

—among them, the structural conditions giving rise to international terrorism, the flawed and often ethnocentric reasoning of many policy-makers and pundits, and the troubling contradictions of state surveillance and the mechanisms of power in allegedly “open” societies. The events of September 2001, together with the subsequent wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, do raise important and troubling questions of direct relevance to the work that anthropologists do. What, indeed, are we to make of violent encounters that seem to pit Western “secularism” and “humanism” against what many take to be anachronistic strains of Islamic “fundamentalism”? The powerful insight of anthropology is not that such questions are easily resolved but that even to pose them at all assumes too much about how the “West” differs from the “Rest.” For instance, **secularization theory** has been justifiably critiqued on the grounds that “secular” is surely not the best adjective to apply when considering American society (or even European societies, for that matter, despite an increasing tendency to be “de-churched”). Likewise, media portrayal of radical Islam often obscures the vast diversity of this world religion, alluding only in passing to the major cultural and theological differences between Sunni and Shi’a; neglecting to examine the creolization of religion within radically heterogeneous cultural and linguistic contexts (for instance, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Indonesia); and reducing a rich history of science, art, engineering, architecture, and scholarship to the actions of what amounts to a very small percentage of the heterogeneous **Umma**, or global Islamic community. In this general failure to grasp the conditions and causes underlying intersocietal enmity, the stakes are enormous, especially at a time of military proliferation and a frightening prospect that **weapons of mass destruction** will indeed play a part in future conflicts.

Can anthropological theory, in spite of all its internal diversity, shed sufficient light on both cultural differences and similarity in order to ferret out the root causes of mistrust and hatred that provoke deadly action on such an enormous scale? If this question was at one time merely academic, it is no longer so. As at least two wars, innumerable terrorist attacks, and one Arab Spring have shown, failure to understand the dynamics behind social and political differences and intercultural enmity can have real-world consequences. How does our understanding of the *history* of anthropological theory contribute to a more powerful focus on what we assume to be true, real, or taken for granted in current anthropological reasoning? Before attempting to tentatively answer this question, let us briefly review the

current state of the field as described in the latter sections of this book.

Forgetting the Past

In the second decade of the twenty-first century, we can trace the fault lines of differences within and across anthropology. Proponents of anthropology as an “interpretive science” seek to understand the global interconnections among power, identity, and practice. These constitute a camp of humanistically oriented scholars whose proverbial tents (not to mention departmental offices) are pitched alongside those who would defend a biocultural, ecological, or materialist vision of their discipline. Generally speaking, the distinction between “public” and “applied” anthropology mirrors this rift, at least to the extent that many applied practitioners tend to embrace positivism as traditionally received within the academy at large. Self-described public anthropologists may or may not be “applied” scholars in this sense, but in all cases their chief desire is to bring to light the cultural biases, misapprehensions, and distortions in power that shape events in the world. On another level, we do see among those influenced by gender and sexuality theory, postcolonialism, and the postmodern critiques an unabashed interest in activism for social justice and equality. While positivist-oriented anthropologists often share these concerns, there is on the whole much less enthusiasm for fusing scientific with social ambitions. This has in turn led to something of a diffidence within either camp to the methods and goals of the other.

That undergraduate and graduate students encounter this diversity of perspective up close—in lecture halls, university corridors, and at departmental receptions—is incontrovertible. Unfortunately, although an important experience for young anthropologists, student encounters with the sharply divergent opinions of their professors can also be somewhat misleading about both the durability of the discipline and the commitment of its practitioners. One possible implication of the postmodern critique has therefore been that the field is so theoretically divided as to spell the end of academic anthropology as we know it.

As if this were not enough cause for concern, in a prescient essay Herbert Lewis (b. 1934) claimed in 1999 that, much as we might have hoped otherwise, and for all their purported insight, those fanning the flames of disciplinary critique in anthropology had failed to substantially advance the field or even to suggest new ways to address those issues that had, until

disciplinary critique became the vogue, been the focus for “modernist” anthropology. Adding to this bleak evaluation, Lewis subsequently argued that an even bigger problem for the next generation of anthropologists might derive from a growing failure to adequately “dialogue with the ancestors.” Thus, some years later, contemporary undergraduates, and even graduate students, are seldom required to *really* confront the work of their disciplinary forebears in other than a cursory fashion. Instead, it is largely assumed (in no small measure as a result of reading postmodern critiques) that the substance and method of earlier generations is both theoretically and morally bankrupt and that, consequently, there is little need to become acquainted with—let alone embrace—the work of “unenlightened” ancestors. Indeed, the harshest among these critics have treated anthropology in much the same manner as they claim anthropology has treated non-Western peoples: as monolithic, single-minded, internally undifferentiated, and, to state the matter baldly, primitive.

According to Lewis, a serious consequence of this state of affairs (which he anticipated) has been that student anthropologists are frequently dissuaded from immersing themselves in many of the key texts of the anthropological canon. These texts are frequently referred to in graduate seminars but are rarely explored in any sustained depth these days, and, even when they are discussed in detail, it is often for the purpose of displaying the “misrepresentation” of older schools and personalities—these are our ancestors, and here is how they got it wrong. A paradox of postmodernity, at least in its radical (and frequently misunderstood) incarnations, is that it presents itself as the final answer to a “crisis in representation”—the only legitimate perspective to take on the construction of anthropological knowledge, in comparison with which all others are naïve both in their “objective” representation of the Other and in their failure to recognize the social processes involved in their own construction.

For this reason, Lewis feared that “the basic questions that our predecessors struggled with years ago are still with us, but the hard-won lessons they taught us are being forgotten.” The time was coming, he cautioned, and, indeed, may already have arrived, when anthropologists would again turn away from fashionable critique in search of the “objectivity” of bygone generations. When the hour for a new paradigm shift arrives, to whom will the new generation turn? To those long-since-discredited ancestors? Or will anthropologists begin again by reinventing

wheels that, unbeknownst to them, have been turning (albeit creakily) for generations?

Agreeing to Disagree

All this suggests, at the very least, that the continuing value of anthropology as the self-identified “science of humanity” is in some doubt. Might a premature demise, or fragmentation, of anthropology be just around the corner?

From this gloomy forecast, there is good reason to dissent, and our feeling is that reports of the discipline’s “death” have been, as Mark Twain once asserted, “greatly exaggerated.” While it is the case that postmodern deconstructionism, lamented by Lewis, has inspired persistent rumours in recent years concerning the sealed fate of anthropology as a unified academic discipline, the apocalyptic fears of some have clearly not been realized more than a quarter-century after the postmodern turn confronted anthropology. We need not see the world through rose-coloured glasses in order to understand this; it could be that, far from disciplinary idealism, the structural constraints and exigencies of academic colleges and departments have had as much or more to do with the persistence of anthropology as with a desire for unity. However it has come about, it seems obvious that there continues to exist at least some general agreement about the collective vision and relevance (if not unity) of anthropological theory and that this vision, expressed through a fabled anthropological canon and general trends in anthropological scholarship, remains largely intact in spite of the apprehension that epistemic malcontents might eventually dislodge it.

Evidence abounds to support this claim. For one thing, Boas, Malinowski, Radcliffe-Brown, Mead, Geertz, and Lévi-Strauss—central players in a select group of quasi-mythical “founders” of one school or another—remain firmly enshrined within an anthropological pantheon that most professional sociocultural anthropologists continue to accept as more or less valid. Some might view this as derailing the postmodern critique—that (at least in its more extreme guises) postmodern epistemology really succeeds only at throwing the historical baby out with the theoretical bathwater by questioning the work of ancestral generations but offering little of substance to replace them. It seems more likely, however, that the sense of foreboding cultivated through the 1970s, 1980s, and early 1990s was always somewhat overblown, infighting and hyperbole being as much stock-in-trade among anthropologists as within other professional communities. Critical medical anthropology,

globalization, postcolonial, gender and sexuality approaches, and the study of digital cultures are by some lights non-positivist, but are they truly *postmodern* in the sense of denying the value or authority of critical analysis within anthropology? The answer is a qualified no. While advocates of critical anthropology tell us not to take received authority at face value, they do not advocate a descent into epistemological anarchy or solipsism. To the contrary, they encourage us to be more exacting in our search for real social and cultural processes, in the hope that true knowledge will bring us to a more just and humane global society. While controversial applications of anthropological expertise (such as cooperation with the military and other state agencies) will undoubtedly continue to rankle, it is also clear that universal commitment to mainstream disciplinary principles endures.

We should also remember that, at the very least, anthropologists consider themselves to be united by their own history, even if it is a history plagued with squabbling, rancour, and occasional professional jealousy. In the end, they simply agree to disagree for the sake of getting on with the business at hand. Even the most sanguine would concede these days that there exists no universally valid reading of the anthropological past, at least from the point of view of theory, binding on all practitioners in all the various world traditions in anthropology. This being said, there is reason to believe, as argued in this book, that, far from spinning round and round in circles, the expanded scope of anthropological work *has* led to substantially new discoveries that might be called “scientific progress,” were that phrase not already sullied as naïve or clichéd. There has been progress in the sense that the diverse interests of anthropologists have led them to study all manner of groups and subgroups within and across societies, paying careful attention to relations of power and knowledge—all of which spells a widening and deepening of the discipline. In terms of the anthropological *subfields* (a term that designates any of the many strands of research and perspective within holistic anthropology), insights from the burgeoning research areas of medical anthropology, postcolonial theory, and globalization have moved social science forward in its collective effort to understand social and cultural life with greater rigour and detail. With respect to anthropological theory at a more general level, a hallmark of the past quarter-century has been greater attention to the fluidity of social structure and the capacity of individuals to comprehend and change the conditions of their existence. These “breakthroughs” can indeed be regarded as a substantive expansion of the

field, at least in comparison to their relatively unreflective ethnocentric predecessors of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Beyond the personalities and specific theories involved, therefore, most anthropologists would also concur with the rather bland assertion that the fabled theoretical dichotomies signified by the contrasting of culture with society, synchrony with diachrony, structure with agency, and idealism with materialism, among others, do not necessarily reveal a discipline teetering on the edge of dissolution. Neither does the increasing division of what was, in North America at least, a four-field profession into a bewildering variety of subfields imply the “death” of anthropology. To the contrary, most anthropologists today would affirm that the discipline’s ongoing intellectual vigour is not undermined, but revealed, both by the proliferation of interests, perspectives, and methods and by the eagerness with which practitioners engage one another in hashing out what (if anything) such dichotomies make known about human social life. For these reasons, arguments over theory are perhaps better thought of as means of integrating diverse kinds of practitioners into a single, flexible, yet enduring whole.

Failure to see disputes over theory in this light tends to result in attributing far more import to them than they actually deserve. They very quickly become “red herrings” that distract anthropologists from developing new insights, instead obliging them to defend their positions both in print and in the heated salons of professional conferences. All things considered, it hardly seems controversial to maintain that it is the strength of debate, rather than the narrowness of opinion, that is the hallmark of any strong academic discipline. If such were not the case, there would likely be little or no interest in books such as this one.

“-isms” in Schism

Key Word: American Anthropologist

Even if there existed no firmly established pantheon or cumulative aspect to the work of anthropologists, the absence of *theoretical* consensus hardly makes professional disunity inevitable. Nor, it must be said, does it rule out fragmentation. In the United States and Canada, many anthropologists continue to regard as critical to the intellectual vitality of anthropology the work of biological anthropologists, archaeological anthropologists, linguistic anthropologists, and an especially outspoken and diverse subfield of cultural anthropologists, together with their numerous special-interest groups. On the other hand, many North American anthropologists, and in growing numbers, no longer accept the four-field premise. It would therefore not do to adopt a smug posture on the issue, content in our comfortable certainties about the future of anthropology. As in other fields of knowledge, it makes little sense to be dogmatic on such issues. If it is true, as Eric Wolf proposed in the early 1980s, that a unified anthropology springs more from political-economic developments in the modern academy than it does from consensus about social and cultural theory, there is no reason to suppose that anthropology *needs* to be unified across four fields in order to retain its analytical value or power. The European academy provides a strong precedent, given that social anthropology, biological anthropology, linguistics, and archaeology are seldom, if ever, housed within the same departments and colleges. It is also true that schism within North American university anthropology departments has taken place and seemingly without apocalyptic consequences; witness painful ruptures at Stanford, Duke, Calgary (since repaired), and Harvard, among others.

A 2006 debate on the issue in *Anthropology News* is diagnostic of an enduring fascination with the theme of unity, especially across the “sacred bundle” (as Daniel Segal and Sylvia Yanagisako have called it) of four fields. In debating the state of four-field anthropology, anthropologists, both pro- and anti-schism, were given equal time to air their differences. Some, such as R. Brooke Thomas, stand firm in a “traditional” position, arguing that “Our strength as a discipline seems to lie in the multiple perspectives we can bring to a problem.” His expectation was that pressing environmental needs

confronting the globe will inevitably bring together biological and cultural approaches in the coming generations. Notwithstanding the accidental origins of four fields in the United States and Canada, it is evident that generations of forebears have devoted their careers to preserving the “grandiose perspective” that different approaches bring. Can we now afford to set aside these efforts in the tenuous hope that anthropology will continue to be relevant (and anthropologists continue to be employed) into the twenty-first century?

On the other side of this issue, Fran Mascia-Lees has suggested that rumours of peaceful coexistence—theoretically and practically—among the subfields have been greatly exaggerated. Despite her personal commitment to anthropological holism, the stark facts suggest that while much is made of disciplinary unity, with relatively few exceptions most professionals blithely pursue research agendas that focus squarely on one of the subfields. It is vital, therefore, that we ask ourselves the very serious question of whether there exist “compelling intellectual connections” among us, or whether assumptions to this effect are little more than an artifact of our professional past. While many have been quick to lay the blame for this at the feet of postmodernism, perhaps expecting the *American Anthropologist* to substitute poetry for scientific reportage and analysis, it seems beyond doubt that the moment of introspection that characterized the 1980s has now given way to other foci: globalization, world traditions in anthropology, and the extent to which anthropologists are and should be responsible, ethically bound players in the public sphere. In fact, Mascia-Lees proposes, no one is to blame for this “crisis” of fragmentation; it has been a largely organic and even predictable development within a vibrant, efflorescing discipline. While some predict the death of a discipline, the very same factors leading to dysfunction and schism can be read as diagnostic of healthy, timely academic debate. On the other hand, if rapprochement is ever to be attained, especially between biological and cultural anthropologists, then new questions must be asked and new paradigms for collaboration developed. As of now, however, these “very different conversational interactions” are few and far between.

History of the Future

In 2002, the American Anthropological Association celebrated its centennial year, a distinguished commemoration that coincided with a chorus of voices, from all quarters of the discipline, clamouring for increased introspection and attention to the future of the field. Although it is difficult to read the tea leaves of anthropologies to come, it is possible to speculate to a limited extent about trends of the future.

To begin, one implication of the diversity encountered in this book is that, although many who fear for the future of academic anthropology will continue to consider consensus regarding the best theories and methods the “holy grail” of our discipline, this longing might well prove utopian. Short of this, at an institutional level, students of anthropology will continue to be exposed to the canon and the range of possibilities available from a discipline whose holistic character has always differentiated the field from its sister disciplines in the humanities and social sciences.

Perhaps more interestingly, there is the question posed at the outset of this conclusion: What does the historical diversity discussed in this book (especially with respect to anthropology’s most recent schools of thought) suggest about future directions in the development of anthropological theory? Regna Darnell (b. 1943) and Frederic W. Gleach (b. 1960), in their introduction to the centennial edition of *American Anthropologist* in 2002, wrote that we are living in and passing through a “Janus-faced” moment, in which we are “looking both to the past and to the future for inspiration.” Wade Davis’s admonition to cross-cultural understanding in the wake of unimaginable violence is but one example of how anthropologists are increasingly looking inward for resolutions to global misunderstanding, tension, and violence. This is not the dispassionate anthropology prized in the heydays of evolutionism and structural-functionalism. Rather, it is a perspective that suggests that the future relevance of anthropology lies in its ability to contribute to essentially moral debates about social relations. Following the lead of public anthropology, future theory may well turn on the moral implications of human diversity—a phenomenon that anthropologists and proto-anthropologists have been unveiling, arguably since classical antiquity. The sites of such theorizing may be university departments, professional journals, and conferences. Or, as Davis and others have chosen,

these discussions might take place in the more public arenas that comprise today's mass media: newspapers, magazines, television, the Internet, and other forms of electronic media.

If this is indeed to be the discipline's path, anthropologists must be prepared to continue divesting themselves of illusions concerning the history of their field as a "pure" science. As a consequence of a variety of political and social events and movements, especially following the end of World War II, few would now deny that the history of anthropological theory is a story firmly embedded in *Western* experience. Hence, adopting the Western analytical distinctions among religion, science, and humanism has allowed construction of a historical pedigree for academic anthropology in which the various ancient and medieval schools leading up to Christianity had a profound and lasting influence, as did the revival of humanism in the Renaissance and the origin of modern science in the seventeenth century. Arguably, the most momentous historical episodes of all in this epistemological lineage have been the voyages of geographical discovery, which brought Westerners into contact with non-Westerners and launched the period of cross-cultural encounter that, in one way or another, has been a centripetal focus for anthropology ever since.

But equally important here is what remains unstated in this "anthropology of anthropology": that *the* history of anthropological theory is really *a* history of anthropological theory. Anyone truly committed to the universalizing of anthropology as a perspective must allow for other anthropologies, other tales of discovery and cross-cultural encounter, and other methods and contexts in which knowledge is formed. Paradoxically, the more powerful anthropology becomes as an epistemology, the more fragmented and decentred it appears to be.

This recasting of anthropological knowledge is perhaps the most welcome, and inevitable, consequence of late-twentieth- and early-twenty-first-century theory. The various schools, orientations, and assumptions we have identified as the anthropology of gender and sexuality, political economy, postmodernity, postcolonialism, public anthropology, globalizing cultures, and digital worlds, all draw into sharp relief, through their overlapping foci and methods, a collective concern for the contemporary world that continues to conjure vitality in anthropology. After all, as Darnell and Gleach observe, "there is a certain satisfaction in casting our nets so broadly that almost anything can be encompassed by the term *anthropology*,

as long as it is thought about anthropologically.”

Beyond “One Dead Guy a Week”

In closing, it is fitting to return to what is perhaps the most important site of anthropological practice for most university-based anthropologists: the classroom. From the perspective of teaching anthropology it bears noting that sometimes courses in the history of anthropological theory—especially those dubbed “one dead guy a week”—are taught by the “trapeze method,” meaning that theories are connected by “swinging” from older to more recent orientations as the academic semester or quarter progresses. Connections among theories taught according to this method often remain implicit and are, therefore, at best superficial and at worst conducive to the false impression that theories float above real people like acrobats who never touch the ground.

This impression is perhaps unavoidable. Still, this book shows that the history of theory is defined not so much by “facts” as by the proclivities of different anthropological historians and historians of theory and by the vagaries and extent of consensus that develop around one or another perspective. Only the most novice readers will conclude, after reading the book, that theory is “out there,” ready to be plucked from the air by a particularly ingenious or fortuitous “discoverer.” Far from being unsullied by human hands, students of the diversity of opinion within anthropology will benefit from what is perhaps the most enduring insight of twenty-first-century anthropology so far: that the making of knowledge about human life is a labour-intensive, contentious, and thoroughly human activity. After modernity, anthropological theory too—unlike the acrobat—has its feet planted on *terra firma*.

Study Questions

Introduction

1. Is it worthwhile to try to preserve the traditional four or five subfields of North American anthropology?
2. Which definition of anthropological theory that you have encountered makes the most sense?
3. Why should you study the history of anthropology?
4. Can anthropology be religious?

Part One: The Early History of Anthropological Theory

Anthropology in Antiquity

5. Did anthropology exist in ancient China?
6. Who contributed more to anthropological theory, the Greeks or the Romans?
7. Would anthropology have been better off without the advent of Christianity?

The Middle Ages

8. What was anthropology up to in the Middle Ages?
9. Could there be an Islamic anthropology?

The Renaissance

10. Some people today are critical of what they call secular humanism. In the context of the Renaissance, what does this term mean?
11. What universal standards can anthropologists use to compare and contrast cultures?

Voyages of Geographical Discovery

12. When you first meet someone from a different culture, do you initially observe their similarities to you or their differences from you?
13. If Martians were to visit Earth, what do you think would be their first impression of humanity?
14. If Europeans had never encountered the New World, would their understanding of themselves have been different?

The Scientific Revolution

15. What does it mean for anthropology to be scientific?
16. Can scientific anthropology be empirical by employing only induction and not deduction?
17. Do you think that in the future scientists might decide that Earth is the centre of the universe?

The Enlightenment

18. What is culture?
19. What are the implications of treating anthropology as a social science?
20. If you consider human history to have been progressive, how do you define the term progress?
21. Are there any cultural laws?

The Rise of Positivism

22. Is there anything wrong with anthropologists being nationalistic?
23. Can or should scientists be objective?
24. Is it possible for anthropologists to study the present without referring to the past?

Marxism

25. Is it reasonable to expect that someday social classes will be

eliminated?

26. Materialism is often equated with consumerism. Is this the Marxist understanding of the term?
27. Has history confirmed the Hegelian dialectic?
28. What does it mean to be a Marxist anthropologist?
29. Why are Marxists so often labelled radicals?

Classical Cultural Evolutionism

30. How does prehistory differ from history?
31. How could anthropologists determine whether Lewis Henry Morgan's evolutionary schema is correct?
32. Many classical cultural evolutionary schemas comprised three major periods, for example savagery, barbarism, and civilization. Why do you think that the number three was so popular?
33. How does modern-day Christianity incorporate elements from earlier stages in the evolution of religion?

Evolutionism versus Diffusionism

34. Is it reasonable to criticize diffusionism because it presupposes that some peoples are culturally creative while other peoples can only copy?
35. What do you think accounts for the widespread popular fascination with an early Viking presence in North America?

Archaeology Comes of Age

36. How can the Bible be interpreted to show that Earth is only a few thousand years old?
37. Where did the term *Stone Age* come from?
38. What past archaeological practices would be considered unethical today?

Charles Darwin and Darwinism

39. For a catastrophist geologist, do ancient fossils constitute evidence for

evolution?

40. Why do you suppose many people find Lamarckian evolution more palatable than Darwinian evolution?
41. Why is the term *natural selection* an apt label for Charles Darwin's mechanism of evolution?
42. Why is it challenging to explain human evolution in terms of natural selection?
43. Which version of morality based on Darwinism do you find most credible?
44. Is Darwinism a theory?

Sigmund Freud

45. What is the evidence that the id, ego, and superego exist?
46. Is Freud's account of the primal patricide plausible?
47. Do any other anthropological theories share Freud's vision of culture, or civilization, as opposed to human nature?

Émile Durkheim

48. If some societies cohere because people are similar, while other societies cohere because people are different, where in this vision is there room for social conflict?
49. What are some modern-day examples of collective representations of a collective consciousness, or group mind?
50. In the Durkheimian sense, can there be the sacred without the profane?

Max Weber

51. Why is agency such an important concept in the history of anthropological theory?
52. According to Weber, under what social circumstances are charismatic prophets likely to be most effective?
53. How does Weber address the issue of perceived social injustice?

Ferdinand de Saussure

54. Would Saussure agree with the statement that the world of language is entirely artificial?
55. How many different onomatopoeic sounds can you make?
56. In Saussure's sense, if one were to comprehend the entire *langue* of a language, could one predict what a given speaker of that language would say?

Part Two: The Earlier Twentieth Century

American Cultural Anthropology

57. Franz Boas was a forceful personality in anthropology. Overall, how much do you think anthropological theory is influenced by people rather than ideas?
58. Should it be a mission of anthropology to combat racism in the public domain?
59. Is Boas's historical particularism tantamount to history rather than anthropology?
60. Most anthropologists believe that Native Americans first entered North America by immigrating across the Bering Strait land bridge. Many Native Americans believe that Native Americans have inhabited North America forever. Which of these beliefs is correct?
61. If Osama bin Laden had not been born, do you think that someone else would have masterminded the attacks of 9/11?
62. Was it wrong for Alfred Louis Kroeber to bring Ishi to San Francisco to live?
63. Is cultural relativism a viable ethical position?
64. What is the point of finding fault with Margaret Mead's Samoan fieldwork?
65. Do you think that anthropologists are capable of creating theories to serve their own personal needs and desires?
66. In Ruth Benedict's sense, can you think of any personality characteristic that would be considered deviant in every culture?
67. If the United States or Canada were subject to a national character study, what do you think would be each country's national character?
68. Sometimes it is said that domestic violence is a self-perpetuating cycle in which people who were abused as children become abusers

as parents. Explain this cycle in psychodynamic terms.

69. Have a friend look at the image of the “perfect physique” on page 166 and then ask him or her to write a one-paragraph story about the image. What aspects of your friend’s personality appear to be projected into this story?
70. Why do you think that anthropologists were so taken with the psychology of Sigmund Freud?

French Structural Anthropology

71. In what ways is French structural anthropology rooted in the theories of Émile Durkheim?
72. Do Christmas gift-giving practices appear to conform to Marcel Mauss’s principle of reciprocity?
73. In the Lévi-Straussian sense, what do you suppose mediates the binary oppositions between life and death, and culture and nature? Could there be other mediators?
74. What is the evidence that culture is based on binary oppositions?
75. Analyze from a Lévi-Straussian perspective the last meal you ate.
76. Give two examples of the concept of oscillating equilibrium.
77. What is your opinion of Mary Douglas’s idea that dirty things are morally dangerous because they suggest ambiguity and uncertainty about social boundaries and rules?
78. Is structural Marxism so different from dialectical materialism that it should not even be called Marxist?
79. Why did Marshall Sahlins and Gananath Obeyesekere make so much of the killing of Captain James Cook?
80. In what ways is French structural anthropology indebted to linguistics?
81. In your opinion, what does French structural anthropology fail to do?

British Social Anthropology

82. Can you describe society without using words borrowed from biology?
83. Why are so many anthropologists, including British social anthropologists, preoccupied with the study of kinship?

84. How does Bronislaw Malinowski's fieldwork method of participant-observation relate to Marvin Harris's epistemological distinction between emics and etics?
85. How does Malinowski's theory of functionalism contrast with Sigmund Freud's vision of culture and human nature?
86. Can anthropology be an experimental science?
87. Why did so many British social anthropologists conduct their fieldwork in Africa?
88. Why did E.E. Evans-Pritchard think it was important for anthropologists to show that so-called primitive thought is rational?
89. According to Max Gluckman, why are rituals of rebellion not revolutionary?
90. Does it make any difference that some British social anthropologists supported the British colonial policy of indirect rule over Africa?
91. How might earlier-twentieth-century American anthropology have turned out differently if, at the time, the United States had been a colonial power? How might earlier-twentieth-century French and British anthropology have turned out differently if, at the time, Native peoples were living in France and Britain?

Part Three: The Later Twentieth Century

Cognitive Anthropology

92. Which later-twentieth-century anthropological theories were primarily emic in orientation, and which etic?
93. Do you think that people speaking different languages see the world in fundamentally different ways?
94. Is culture a mental code?

Cultural Neo-evolutionism

95. In what ways does Leslie White's neo-evolutionary theory represent a radical departure from the tenets of Boasian anthropology?
96. White was a materialist. How does his materialism differ from the materialism of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels?
97. Do you find Marshall Sahlins's and Elman Service's reconciliation of

- the theories of Leslie White and Julian Steward satisfactory?
98. Was White a positivist?

Cultural Materialism

99. The concept of false consciousness presupposes that people are not aware of why they behave the way they do. Does this presupposition strike you as counterintuitive?
100. How might Marvin Harris respond to the criticism that cultural materialism is merely his own emic mental construct?
101. How would you go about finding out whether the Aztecs practised cannibalism for food or for religion?

Nature versus Nurture

102. Why have hereditarian views been so controversial in later-twentieth-century anthropology?
103. How would you define the term *scientific racism*?
104. If all human beings exhibit the same behaviour, is that behaviour genetic?
105. How would you go about finding out whether human aggression is genetic?
106. Is it proper to describe animal behaviour using human terms such as selfish and altruistic?
107. What kind of moral code could be based on the understanding that human behaviour is genetically programmed to be self-interested?
108. Is human sociobiology sexist?
109. What would a Marxist anthropologist think about sociobiology?

Symbolic and Interpretive Anthropology

110. Symbolic and interpretive anthropology represents a new, or renewed, interest in cultural meaning. In this context, what does the term *meaning* mean?
111. What does Max Weber's concept of theodicy have to do with his analysis of revitalization movements?
112. In Victor Turner's sense of the term, is the quadrennial presidential

- election a dominant symbol for the United States?
113. According to Turner, why is anti-structure necessary?
 114. In social rituals and rites of passage, could liminality be dangerous?
 115. In the interpretive anthropology of Clifford Geertz, who gets to decide whose interpretation of a culture is correct?
 116. According to Geertz, why is it better for descriptions of culture to be thick rather than thin?
 117. If you could give post-processual archaeology another name, what would it be?
 118. What does it mean to label an anthropological theory Cartesian?
 119. In their heyday, did symbolic and interpretive anthropology constitute a new paradigm in anthropological theory?

Transactionalism

120. How does Fredrik Barth's concept of individuals acting in economic arenas differ from Pierre Bourdieu's concept of individuals acting in social fields?
121. What do sociobiology and transactionalism have in common?

Anthropology and Gender

122. How would you distinguish ideology from theory? Is feminist anthropology ideological?
123. Was Margaret Mead a feminist?
124. Should there be a masculinist anthropology?
125. In the absence of patriarchy, is anthropological feminism necessary?
126. What is the relationship between sex and gender?
127. What does the existence of a Third Gender or Two Spirit in a number of societies suggest about the traditional ideas about the man-woman binary?
128. How important do you think the "repressive hypothesis" has been in Western culture? Is Foucault correct to think that repression is itself evidence of cultural preoccupation with the sexual?
129. Do you think it is important to devote more study to ostensibly "normal" heterosexual identities as well as non-traditional ones, and why?

Political Economy

130. What elements of political economic theory are Marxist?
131. From the perspective of political economy, what is meant by the phrase “the development of underdevelopment”?
132. Can anthropologists ever escape the global reach of capitalism?
133. What is meant by the term *anthropological Other*?
134. Is it reasonable to accuse political economy of being ethnocentric?
135. What is “Orientalism,” and who are the “Orientals”?
136. In what ways has Edward Said’s work been influential in anthropology?
137. How does postcolonial theory characterize the relationship between the Western world and non-Western peoples?
138. In what ways has Western scientific theory been inadequate in dealing with the postcolonial age, according to theorists such as Talal Asad and Vivek Dhareshwar?

Postmodernity

139. What are the theoretical implications of the observation that no one form of knowledge is authoritative?
140. In postmodern theory, what is meant by the term *modernity*?
141. In 2011, the American Anthropological Association considered removing a description of anthropology as scientific from its Long-Range Plan. Was this idea ill-advised?
142. Paul Feyerabend once pronounced that “the best education consists in immunizing people against systematic attempts at education.” What is the theoretical basis of this pronouncement?
143. Are Michel Foucault’s discourses of power satisfactory as a definition of culture?
144. How does Foucault’s account of madness and civilization alter the definitions of science, humanism, and religion set forth in the introduction to this book?
145. Should we question the credibility of Foucault’s views because Foucault himself is a socially powerful expert in the academic community?
146. Explain how the concept of agency figures in the theories of Pierre

Bourdieu.

147. Are Bourdieu's fields satisfactory as a definition of culture?
148. In postmodern terms, what does it mean to deconstruct an anthropological explanation of culture?
149. What can or should the ethnographer do if all knowledge of a culture is subjective?
150. If, as critical medical anthropologists assert, medicine is ideological, is it any less effective?
151. What is the biomedical definition of illness?

Part Four: The Early Twenty-First Century

Globalization

152. Is the world getting bigger or smaller?
153. How does globalization theory draw on the theories of both political economy and postmodernism?
154. Why do you suppose it might be difficult to predict the globalized future?

Public Anthropology

155. Do you expect most public anthropologists to be politically conservative or liberal?
156. In public anthropology, is it problematic that the boundary between an anthropologist's professional and personal lives might blur?
157. How many anthropology publics are there?
158. Why do you suppose anthropology remains relatively little known or understood by the public?
159. Why do you suppose so many people find it easier to accept truthy rather than truthful statements?
160. Do you think that these days anthropologists are spending too much time on ethical issues?
161. Did the United States army's HTS program qualify as public anthropology, and why did it prove so controversial among anthropologists?

World Traditions in Anthropology

162. Describe the cultural and linguistic context in which some varieties of anthropological theory became central and others marginalized.
163. What is the significance of textual translation when considering the influence of non-anglophone anthropologies?
164. Do Russian/Soviet, Japanese, and African varieties of anthropology express theoretical orientations that are different from anglocentric ones? If so, how?

Anthropologies of the Digital Age

165. Do you agree with Gabriella Coleman that predictions of a utopian “digital age” have depended on cultural images of rupture and transformation? Coleman was writing of the 1990s, but can you think of ways in which these ideas are still used to describe the digital future?
166. Does the development of Web 2.0 change the possibilities for anthropological research, and, if so, how?
167. How do digital discourses support a general view that modernization is inevitably good?
168. How does the digital practice of “linking-up” help create social and support networks in Jamaica, and for whom are such networks especially beneficial?
169. How does John Dewey’s theory of “pragmatism” help to understand the formation of beautiful, compelling online worlds such as World of Warcraft?

Conclusion

170. According to Herbert Lewis, how have postmodern trends in anthropological theory distorted and misrepresented the value of anthropological ancestors?
171. In reference to which issues have anthropologists debated the pros and cons of a four-field schism?
172. Ten years from now, which anthropological theories do you think will prevail?

Glossary

This glossary defines the key words bolded in the text. They are also defined in the margins.

adaptation In cultural ecology, the result of cultures adjusting to environments, or in Darwinian evolution, the result of natural selection.

adhesions Edward Burnett Tylor's name for cultural traits that are statistically significantly associated.

agency In recent anthropological theory, creative acts of intentioned individuals that generate social form and meaning.

allopathic The treatment of illness and disease using the knowledge and techniques of Western biomedicine.

altruism Self-sacrificing behaviour, seemingly contrary to natural selection.

American Anthropologist The flagship professional journal of the American Anthropological Association.

analog Electronic signals characterized by a limitless range of possible values within a specified range, made increasingly obsolete with the widening availability of digital technology.

ancestor worship The veneration of departed relatives; in classical cultural evolutionism, a religious phase.

androcentrism The deeply held cultural bias to view the male as intellectually, spiritually, and physically superior to the female.

anglocentrism A privileging of the Anglo-American English language as a global medium of communication and patterns of cultural practice and consumption, tending to marginalize other languages and those who use

them.

anima An invisible and diffuse supernatural force that can take the form of souls and ghosts.

anomie According to Émile Durkheim, the sense of personal alienation caused by the absence of familiar social norms.

anthropo-geography The study of relationships among geographically contiguous cultures, as practised by Friedrich Ratzel.

anthropological feminism The perspective that feminist views should remain relatively autonomous in anthropology.

anthropological political economy The view that peoples exposed to the global expansion of capitalism experience and modify it in different and creative ways.

antipodes Opposites, or peoples on opposite sides of the world.

anti-structure According to Victor Turner, the side of culture expressed through ritual “chaos,” as during liminal states.

applied anthropology Anthropology conducted by anthropologists working outside traditional academic settings such as universities.

armchair anthropologist An anthropologist who has done little or no fieldwork.

Augustinian Christianity The theology of Saint Augustine, which became the state religion of Rome and prevailed during the first part of the Middle Ages.

australopiths Primitive, ape-like human ancestors known from fossils found in Africa.

authoritative knowledge The idea that one body of knowledge is privileged over other bodies in that it has greater access to ultimate reality or the “Truth.”

band The simplest form of human social organization, placed in evolutionary sequence before the tribe, chiefdom, and state.

barbarism *See under* savagery

basic personality structure In psycho-dynamic anthropology, core personality, shaped by primary cultural institutions and projected onto secondary cultural institutions.

behavioural domain In the theory of cultural materialism, what people do contrasted with what people think.

behavioural genetics The branch of genetics that investigates inherited contributions to behavioural differences.

berdache Originally a seventeenth-century French term designating a younger, submissive partner in a homosexual relationship, referring historically to Native American individuals who appeared, from the perspective of French colonizers and others, to be neither men nor women in terms of behaviour and appearance.

binary coding In computer software and other information technology, the expression of meaning in sequences of 0s and 1s, two binary digits that can be exponentially combined and recombined to produce new meanings.

binary oppositions In French structural anthropology, the universal logic of dualities.

binomial nomenclature The hierarchical system of classifying living things into named scientific groups, with one name for genus and a second name for species.

biocultural anthropology Anthropology aimed at exploring interactions between human biology and culture, usually according to ecology.

biogenetic law The principle that ontogeny, the growth of the individual, recapitulates phylogeny, the growth of the species.

bio-logi c A term used by anthropologist Oyèrónké Oyewùmí to describe the basic assumption of biological determinism that underlies Western scientific knowledge of sex and gender.

biologize To regard as caused by heredity more than by environment.

biology of nepotism A colloquial label for sociobiology focusing on the preferential treatment of kin.

biomedicine The science-based form of ethnomedical knowledge and practice dominant in Western societies.

body language A colloquial term for non-verbal communication.

body-reasoning A term used by anthropologist Oyèrónké Oyewùmí to describe Western science's assumption that the human body is a universal foundation for objective knowledge of identity.

bourgeoisie In Marxist terminology, the middle class.

British empiricism The scientific epistemology of induction fashioned by philosophers Francis Bacon and John Locke.

British social anthropology The school of structuralism and functionalism led by Alfred Reginald Radcliffe-Brown and Bronislaw Malinowski.

Calvinist Protestantism The Christian doctrines and practices traced to John Calvin that oppose Roman Catholicism on the basis of scripture and justification by faith.

capitalism The political economic system characterized by private ownership of the means of production and unfettered exchange of commodities in the marketplace, yielding profit.

cargo cults Melanesian religious revitalization movements that anticipate and celebrate the future return of material affluence.

catastrophism The geological doctrine that agents of geological change have been more dramatic in the past than in the present; contrasted with

uniformitarianism.

cephalic index The measured ratio of head breadth to head length, used in nineteenth-century racial classifications.

charismatic prophets As identified by Max Weber, individuals who experience a revelation that mandates the establishment of a new social order based on new ethical ideals.

civilization *See under* savagery

classical cultural evolutionism The theoretical orientation of nineteenth-century cultural evolutionists who used the comparative method.

classificatory A type of kinship, contrasted with the descriptive type, that merges kinship categories.

cognitive anthropology The school concerned with folk taxonomies and semantic domains as practised in ethnolinguistics and by ethnoscientists in the New Ethnography.

collective consciousness According to Émile Durkheim, the source of collective representations of social facts, sometimes called the group mind.

collective representations According to Émile Durkheim, manifestations of the collective consciousness, or group mind.

colonial encounter The historical encounter between European colonizers and the indigenous peoples of the world, who were then often marginalized or oppressed by colonialism.

communist revolution In Marxist theory, the replacement of bourgeois by proletarian ownership of the means of production, ushering in socialism and ultimately communism.

communitas A term employed by Victor Turner to refer to the ritual fusion of individuals into a collective identity.

comparative method The use of extant primitive peoples to represent extinct primitive peoples, as in classical cultural evolutionism.

componential analysis A research technique of cognitive anthropologists used to generate folk taxonomies of semantic domains.

configationalism The search for cultural patterns, often in the idiom of psychology.

consanguine A family type based on group marriage between brothers and sisters.

contextual Pertaining to post-processual archaeologists critical of the nomothetic New Archaeology.

contract societies In the schema of Henry Maine, societies that stress individualism, hold property in private, and maintain control by legal sanctions; contrasted with status societies.

core In world-system theory, Western nations and regions that expropriate and control resources of non-Western nations and regions; contrasted with periphery.

cosmological order A phrase describing the nature of otherworldly deities or powers and their relationships to human beings.

cosmology The branch of philosophy concerned with the origin and structure of the universe.

creationism The view that biological species are divinely created and do not evolve.

creolization An anthropological term borrowed from linguistics suggesting the fusion of divergent cultural concepts and practices, particularly in the context of postcolonial and globalization studies.

criterion of form The criterion used by anthro-geographers to determine that similar cultural forms are the result of diffusion.

critical anthropologists Anthropologists who self-reflect and share criticisms of positivism.

cross-cousins Cousins related through parents of the opposite sex.

cross-cultural analysis Analysis of similarities and differences across cultures.

cultural eclectics Anthropological theorists who on different occasions attach causal priority to the domain of thought rather than behaviour, or behaviour rather than thought.

cultural ecology The examination of interactions between cultural and environmental variables.

cultural idealists Anthropological theorists who attach causal priority to the domain of thought rather than behaviour.

cultural materialism The theory of Marvin Harris that distinguishes emic from etic perspectives and mental from behavioural domains, and that advocates infrastructural determinism.

cultural neo-evolutionism Twentieth-century cultural evolutionism, a revival and reformulation of classical cultural evolutionism.

cultural relativism The proposition that cultural differences should not be judged by absolute standards.

cultural resource management (CRM) Activities that share the practical goal of protecting and preserving objects and places deemed to be of cultural significance.

culture Defined many ways; with reference to the Enlightenment, the accumulated way of living created by people and transmitted from one generation to the next extrasomatically rather than through genes.

culture areas Geographical areas associated with particular cultures.

culture-at-a-distance The study of cultures without the benefit of fieldwork, practised by American psychological anthropologists in the era of World

War II.

culture circle In German, *Kulturkreis*, a concept used to represent the process of cultural diffusion.

culture-historical archaeology Archaeology as practised in the era of Franz Boas's historical particularism.

culturology Leslie White's name for the nomothetic study of culture.

cybernetics The study of regulatory systems and structures taking various forms, including digital, mechanical, biological, and social systems, a term now aligned most closely with how any system is controlled by technology.

Darwinism A general label for ideas associated with Charles Darwin's theory of evolution.

deconstructionism A term describing the ambition of postmodernism to understand the political and cultural contexts "hidden" behind the writing, or "construction," of narratives.

deduction In scientific epistemology, the use of logic to reason from general to particular statements; contrasted with induction.

deistic Pertaining to deism, the view that God created the universe but remains relatively uninvolved in its day-to-day operations; contrasted with theistic.

descent group Individuals who perceive themselves to be descended in a lineage from a real or hypothetical common ancestor.

descriptive A type of kinship system, contrasted with the classificatory type, that splits kinship categories.

development and underdevelopment theory André Gunder Frank's theory about the systematic exploitation of underdeveloped nation-states and regions by developed nation-states and regions.

diachronic Historically oriented, or concerned with the past; contrasted with synchronic.

dialectical materialism The philosophy of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, commonly called Marxism.

diary disease Pierre Bourdieu's tongue-in-cheek label for the radical deconstruction of some postmodern theorists, particularly those preoccupied with second-guessing their own analyses.

dictatorship of the proletariat In the theory of dialectical materialism, the temporary phase of political organization leading to permanent communism.

diffusionism The doctrine that cultural innovations evolve once and are then acquired through borrowing or immigration; contrasted with independent invention.

digital Referring to the use of two digits, 0 and 1, in creating specific sequences of electronic directions or information, particularly in the context of computer software.

discourses of power Michel Foucault's phrase for the spectrum of institutions, rhetorics, and strategies employed by one group to dominate another group.

DNA Deoxyribonucleic acid, the biochemical substance of heredity.

dominant symbol Victor Turner's term for a symbol with multiple, and sometimes contradictory, meanings.

Dot Com collapse Also referred to as the "Dot Com crash" or "bursting of the Dot Com bubble," a sharp drop in stock value for many Internet-based e-companies in 1999–2001 following a protracted period of strong growth and uninhibited venture capitalism throughout the 1990s.

doxa Pierre Bourdieu's term for a psychological state in which all members of a community consider relations natural, including relations of social,

economic, and political inequality.

dualism The idea of philosopher René Descartes that mind and matter constitute distinct realms knowable by distinct means.

ego Translated “I,” according to Sigmund Freud, the part of the psyche that interacts with the outside world.

Electra complex According to Sigmund Freud, a troublesome psychological state of girls induced by their sexual desire for their fathers; contrasted with the Oedipus complex.

elementary forms For Émile Durkheim, the equivalent of collective representations, similar to elementary structures.

elementary structures In French structural anthropology, universal mental logics and their cultural manifestations.

emergent In poststructural theory, the term suggests the fluid character of culture and consciousness—always in the process of becoming and never “completed.”

emic In theories including cultural materialism, the epistemological perspective of the investigated, or “the insider point of view”; contrasted with etic.

enculturation The process of an individual acquiring culture, usually while growing up.

entropy Disorder in the universe, increasing according to the second law of thermodynamics.

epiphenomenon A phenomenon resulting from another phenomenon.

epistemology The branch of philosophy that explores the nature of knowledge.

ethical Pertaining to prescriptions for correct behaviour that put the individual in accordance with a metaphysical order.

ethnocentric Pertaining to ethnocentrism, or cultural bias.

ethnolinguistics The name for linguistically oriented research methods of cognitive anthropology.

ethnomedical Pertaining to ethnomedicine, the anthropological study of non-Western medical systems.

ethnoscience A term for the collection of methods used in cognitive anthropology.

ethology The study of animal behaviour in the understanding that it sheds light on the innateness of certain human behaviours.

ethos A term meaning spiritual character, used by some anthropologists to characterize a whole culture.

etic In theories including cultural materialism, the epistemological perspective of the investigator, or “the outsider point of view”; contrasted with emic.

eugenicist Pertaining to eugenics, the now-discredited science that endeavoured to “improve” humanity through selective breeding.

Eurocentric The rating of non-European cultures according to a generalized European scale of norms and values.

evolution Whether in the realm of culture or biology, the transformation of one form into another.

evolutionary psychology An outgrowth of sociobiology that uses Charles Darwin’s theory of evolution to explain aspects of human mentality and behaviour as adaptations from the past.

exogamy The practice of marrying or mating outside one’s kinship group; contrasted with endogamy.

false consciousness In the theories of Marxism and cultural materialism, the capability of people to misrepresent the meaning of their behaviour to

themselves and others.

father figures In the psychology of Sigmund Freud, totems that represent culturally ambivalent attitudes toward adult men.

female infanticide The practice of treating male children more favourably than female children, resulting in more female deaths.

feminist anthropology The view that feminist perspectives should be integrated into anthropology.

fields According to Pierre Bourdieu, the dynamic configuration, or network, of objective relationships among social agents and positions.

fixed action pattern As conceived by human ethologists, an innate sequence of behaviour released by a key stimulus of an innate releasing mechanism.

folk taxonomies According to cognitive anthropologists, culturally conditioned maps of semantic domains.

formalists Economic anthropologists who maintained that Western economic concepts apply to non-Western economies; contrasted with substantivists.

four-field approach The traditional approach of American anthropology that divides the study of anthropology into the four fields of archaeological, biological, cultural, and linguistic anthropology.

French rationalism The intellectual tradition associated with René Descartes and the scientific epistemology of deduction.

French structural anthropology The theoretical orientation of Claude Lévi-Strauss and his followers, invoking elementary mental structures, reciprocity, and binary oppositions.

Freudian anthropology The school of psychological anthropology incorporating certain elements of the psychology of Sigmund Freud, also called psycho-dynamic anthropology.

functionalism In British social anthropology, either Alfred Reginald

Radcliffe-Brown's theory of how parts of a society contribute to the whole of society or Bronislaw Malinowski's theory of how culture responds to biological needs in a hierarchically organized way.

Geisteswissenschaften Translated "human sciences," including anthropology; contrasted with *Naturwissenschaften*.

gender The various social roles and identities attributed to individuals and groups on the basis of their biological sex.

genealogical method The method of focusing ethnographic fieldwork on kinship, pioneered by British social anthropologists, notably William H.R. Rivers.

general evolution In the cultural evolutionary schema of Marshall Sahlins and Elman Service, the study of long-range evolutionary progress and trends.

generalized exchange According to Claude Lévi-Strauss, the exchange of women among more than two kinship groups, promoting greater social solidarity than restricted exchange.

general systems theory A cybernetic model for culture used in the New Archaeology.

gestalt A psychological configuration, attributed by some psychological anthropologists to an entire culture.

G.I. Bill Technically, the Serviceman's Readjustment Act, the General Infantry Bill implemented in the United States in 1944 in order to provide various benefits to veterans of World War II, including subsidized tuition and living expenses for veterans wishing to attend college or vocational school.

globalization The expansion of Western institutions and lifeways into non-Western cultures and the emergence of new forms of cultural practice that are global in scope.

global village Marshall McLuhan's term for an increasingly interconnected

global society.

glocalization A term popularized by Roland Robertson to describe the coexistence of globalizing and particularizing tendencies in a society.

Great Chain of Being A medieval philosophical schema that ranked all cosmic and earthly elements, including people, in a single ascending line of importance.

great man theory of history The theory that individuals affect the course of history more than do historical circumstances.

great tradition Robert Redfield's term for cultures characterized by literacy, industrialization, and rational religions; contrasted with little tradition.

group mind According to Émile Durkheim, the source of collective representations of social facts, sometimes called collective consciousness.

group selection A form of natural selection in which individuals behave altruistically, helping their group, and thereby helping themselves; contrasted with kin selection.

habitus Pierre Bourdieu's term for the capacity of individuals to innovate cultural forms based on their personal histories and positions within the community.

hegemony A term for the capacity of one social group to impose particular beliefs or political and economic conditions upon another group.

heliocentrism Literally sun-centredness, the diffusionist view that world civilizations arose from sun worship in Egypt and then spread elsewhere.

hereditarianism The idea that differences among human beings can be accounted for primarily in terms of differential gene distribution to an extent greater than most twenty-first-century biological anthropologists would accept.

hermeneutics The study of meaning, especially in literary texts, applied by interpretive and postmodern anthropologists to the study of culture.

Hinduism An umbrella term for the many local and regional religions of India, most of which emphasize the concept of dharma (loosely defined as cosmic law or ultimate truth, toward which Hindus aspire with the goal of salvation), together with their associated myths, rituals, and ascetic practices.

historical linguistics The study of language consisting of the reconstruction and descriptive tracking of language genealogies over time.

historical particularism The theoretical orientation of Franz Boas and many of his students who focused on the particular histories of particular cultures.

holistic Pertaining to an overarching or integrated outlook, often associated with the broad scope of anthropological inquiry.

human biogram A term used in human ethology to describe the alleged suite of inherited predispositions of *Homo sapiens*.

humanism A system of thought that prioritizes people, contrasted with nature and with a divine or metaphysical order.

Human Terrain System (HTS) From 2007 to 2015, a United States army program in which servicepersons trained across a range of social-scientific fields studied civilian populations in regions where the army was deployed, in order to advise military leaders on how best to engage and communicate with these populations, broadly supporting the goals of counterinsurgency.

hypothetico-deductive model A philosophical model for scientific explanation used in the New Archaeology.

hysteria The clinical condition of calm hallucination that got Sigmund Freud interested in psychology.

id Or libido, according to Sigmund Freud, the part of the human psyche that expresses natural desires.

idealist Pertaining to idealism, the view that ideas more than material

existence cause culture change.

ideational A term describing the view of Max Weber and others that the holistic individual is central to the creation, maintenance, and change of culture.

ideology A term used by Karl Marx and Marxist scholars denoting a system of beliefs that influences the outlooks of individuals and groups.

idiographic Pertaining to a particularizing approach to description and explanation; contrasted with nomothetic.

the Imperial Synthesis A name for the nineteenth-century synthesis of archaeology, racism, and colonialism.

incest Culturally proscribed inbreeding that, according to Sigmund Freud, is an act that led to the primal patricide.

inclusive fitness In sociobiology, the measure, or result, of kin selection.

independent invention The doctrine, linked to psychic unity, that cultural innovation can occur independently in more than one place; contrasted with diffusionism.

indirect rule The British colonial policy of co-opting Native leaders in order to avoid having to govern by force.

induction In scientific epistemology, the process of arriving at generalizations about particular facts; contrasted with deduction.

informant In anthropological fieldwork, someone who provides information to the fieldworker.

infrastructural determinism In Marvin Harris's theory of cultural materialism, the name for the belief that culture change usually begins in the etic infrastructure.

inheritance of acquired characteristics The mechanism of biological evolution proposed by Jean Lamarck whereby traits acquired in one generation can

be transmitted to subsequent generations.

innate releasing mechanism As conceived by human ethologists, the mechanism that, when triggered by a key stimulus, releases a fixed action pattern.

inner-worldly asceticism According to Max Weber, the ethical demand of Calvinist Protestantism that Christians not retreat from the world in order to live piously.

instrumental symbol sVictor Turner's term for those symbols that can be consciously wielded in ritual as a form of technology in order to achieve particular ends.

interpretive anthropology The anthropological school, associated with Clifford Geertz, espousing the view that culture is lived experience integrated into a coherent, public system of symbols that renders the world intelligible.

ivory tower A euphemistic and usually pejorative term for the academy, or universities.

Jensenism The label attached to the view of behavioural geneticist Arthur Jensen that IQ is highly heritable and differs among human races.

key stimulus As conceived by human ethologists, the device that triggers an innate releasing mechanism, thus releasing a fixed action pattern.

kinesics The scientific study of human body motion.

kin selection In sociobiology, reproductive success via genes shared with relatives; sometimes called the biology of nepotism.

knowledge According to Michel Foucault, information linked to social discourses of power.

kula ring A cultural and economic exchange network among inhabitants of the Trobriand Islands, studied by Bronislaw Malinowski.

Kulturkreis Translated "culture circle"; according to certain theorists, the

pattern of diffusion of cultural traits.

labour theory of value The proposition of Karl Marx that commodities should be valued in terms of the human labour required to produce them.

Lamarckism The evolutionary philosophy of Jean Lamarck, notably his mechanism of the inheritance of acquired characteristics.

landscape archaeology Archaeology that considers artifacts and features to be expressions of culture, both incorporating and modifying elements of the natural world.

langue In Ferdinand de Saussure's linguistics, reference to language as an abstract system that can be studied independently of actual speech, or *parole*.

law of universal gravitation Isaac Newton's scientific explanation of universal planetary and earthly motion.

layer-cake model of culture Leslie White's model of culture, with technology and economy at the bottom, ideology at the top, and social and political organization in between.

LGBT An initialism for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender: an array of gendered and sexualized identities, often self-identities.

liminal An ephemeral psychosocial space in which social arrangements are subject to transformation, inversion, and affirmation.

lineages Multi-generational kinship groups with membership determined by ties to common ancestors.

link-up A phrase identified by Heather Horst and Daniel Miller as important to many Jamaican cellphone users, in particular young women of low income who employ cellphones as a "coping strategy" for establishing and maintaining social and economic networks.

little tradition According to Robert Redfield, cultures characterized by illiteracy, preindustrial economies, and "irrational" supernatural beliefs;

contrasted with great tradition.

madness According to Michel Foucault, a cognitive and emotive condition defined by people in power, the definitions changing over time.

maintenance systems In the psychological anthropological model of John Whiting and Irvin Child, the equivalent of Abram Kardiner's primary cultural institutions without Freudian components.

Manchester School A coterie of anthropologists trained under Max Gluckman at Manchester University in the 1950s and 1960s.

Marxism A collection of views derived from Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels and their theory of dialectical materialism.

material culture Cultural meaning expressed in the products of human artifice, or artifacts.

materialism In dialectical materialism, the belief that human existence determines human consciousness; in cultural materialism, the equivalent of the principle of infrastructural determinism.

matrilateral cross-cousin marriage Marriage to a child of one's mother's brother; contrasted with patrilineal cross-cousin marriage.

matrilineal Unilineal kinship systems reckoned through the female line.

means of production In dialectical materialism, how people make a living in the material world.

mechanical philosophy The philosophy, inspired by the law of universal gravitation, portraying the universe as a complex machine with fine-tuned, interacting parts.

mechanical solidarity According to Émile Durkheim, social cohesion maintained by similarities among individuals; contrasted with organic solidarity.

mechanics The medieval science of motion.

medical anthropology The cross-cultural, pan-historical study of sickness and health.

mental domain In the theory of cultural materialism, what people think contrasted with what people do.

Midwestern Taxonomic Method The archaeological classification used in culture-historical archaeology.

missing links Perceived gaps in the evolutionary record.

modernity According to postmodern theorists, the Enlightenment-inspired, invented tradition of dispassionate scientific inquiry.

modernization The Western practice of transforming non-capitalist, preindustrial economies into capitalist, industrial economies.

modernization theory An eclectic range of social-scientific and historical perspectives that track the transformation of “traditional” societies, industries, economies, and political systems into “modern” ones.

monogenesis The doctrine that human races constitute a single biological species with a common origin and with differences produced over time; contrasted with polygenesis.

monotheism The belief in a single deity; contrasted with polytheism.

Moundbuilder Myth The myth that a mysterious people other than Native Americans built impressive earthen mounds throughout the American Midwest.

multiculturalism Descriptively, a term that refers to the coexistence of a multiplicity of cultures, adopted by many nation-states, including Canada and India, as a formal aspect of public policy, seeking to promote and deepen it as a social and political attribute.

multilineal According to Max Weber, culture change occurring in fits and starts in different historical contexts; according to Julian Steward, “branching” cultural evolution, contrasted with universal and unilineal

cultural evolution.

multivocal The quality of having more than one possible meaning or interpretation.

museological Pertaining to museology, the academic discipline focusing on museum organization, management, and cultural representation.

naked apery A disparaging term used to describe unfounded assertions about the inheritance of human behaviour.

national character According to certain psychological anthropologists, the dominant personality of a nation.

natural children The early theological conception of “primitive” peoples as capable of “improvement” and conversion to Christianity.

natural selection Charles Darwin’s mechanism for biological evolution, involving struggle for existence and survival of the fittest.

natural slaves The early theological conception of “primitive” peoples as innately imperfect and subservient to European Christians.

nature In the context of the nature versus nurture debate, the source of human behaviour from heredity rather than environment.

Naturwissenschaften Translated “natural sciences”; contrasted with *Geisteswissenschaften*.

neo-evolutionists Twentieth-century anthropologists who revived and reformulated nineteenth-century classical cultural evolutionism.

neoliberal economics A form of political-economic ideology in which governments promote competition among businesses within a capitalist market theoretically free of state oversight.

Neolithic Or New Stone Age, the period of prehistory characterized by polished stone tools and the domestication of animals and plants.

Neptunists Geologists who proposed that the principal agent of major geological change was the subsidence of water; contrasted with Vulcanists.

New Archaeology The nomothetic archaeology advocated by Lewis Binford; also called processual archaeology.

New Ethnography A name for cognitive anthropology focusing on the methodologies of ethnoscience and ethnolinguistics.

New Physical Anthropology The name for physical anthropology committed to the synthetic theory of evolution.

New Stone Age See Neolithic

nihilism The perspective that traditional values and beliefs are fundamentally uncertain and that existence is at base nonsensical.

noble savagery The romanticization of “primitive” life.

nomothetic Generalizing; contrasted with idiographic.

normal science According to Thomas Kuhn, science conducted within a scientific paradigm.

nurture In the context of the nature versus nurture debate, the source of human behaviour from environment rather than heredity.

obscurantism Deliberate obfuscation or vagueness aimed at preventing facts or details about something from becoming known.

Oedipus complex According to Sigmund Freud, the troublesome psychological state of boys induced by their sexual desire for their mothers; contrasted with the Electra complex.

Old Stone Age See Paleolithic

ontogeny The biological growth of an individual.

organic (or organismic) analogy Likening society to an organism, a conceptual device of numerous anthropological theorists.

organic solidarity According to Émile Durkheim, social cohesion maintained by differences and interdependence among individuals; contrasted with mechanical solidarity.

original sin The Christian idea that early sin resulted in the expulsion of humanity from the Garden of Eden.

orthogenesis The idea that biological evolution operates in one direction, usually leading to *Homo sapiens*.

oscillating equilibrium Edmund Leach's term for the continuing existence of social structure, even against the backdrop of constant social change.

Other A postmodern-era label for the people anthropologists study, anthropologists being labelled Self.

Paleolithic Or Old Stone Age, the period of prehistory characterized by chipped and flaked stone tools and hunting and gathering.

paradigm According to Thomas Kuhn, an intellectual framework for "normal" science, which is superseded by another paradigm in a scientific "revolution."

parole In Ferdinand de Saussure's linguistics, reference to language as actually used in speech, often deviating from the abstract structural system of language, or *langue*.

participant-observation The style of anthropological fieldwork requiring the fieldworker to see things from both the "native" and the fieldworker's points of view.

patriarchy A social group governed exclusively by males or groups of males.

patrilateral cross-cousin marriage Marriage to a child of one's father's sister; contrasted with matrilineal cross-cousin marriage.

patrilineal Unilineal kinship systems reckoned through the male line.

perfectibility The idea that humankind is capable of progressing or evolving into some desired end point.

periphery In world-system theory, non-Western regions dominated economically and politically by Western regions; contrasted with core.

personality variables In the psychological anthropological model of John Whiting and Irvin Child, the equivalent of Abram Kardiner's basic personality structure without Freudian components.

phenotype The product of gene action, often affected by environment.

philosophical anarchist Following Paul Feyerabend, someone who believes that all scientific paradigms are logically equivalent, with no logical way to choose among them.

phonemes Minimally contrasting pairs of sounds that create linguistic meaning.

phonemics The study of linguistic meaning created by sounds.

phonetics The study of linguistic sounds that create meaning.

phylogeny The evolutionary growth of a species.

pietistic Pertaining to piety, or religious reverence and devotion.

Pioneer Fund A philanthropic organization dedicated to advancing the "scientific study of heredity and human differences," said by its detractors to be tinged with biological determinism and racism.

pleasure principle According to Sigmund Freud, living libidinally, as directed by the id; contrasted with reality principle.

political economy An anthropological perspective viewing sociocultural form at the local level as penetrated and influenced by global capitalism.

pollution According to Mary Douglas, aspects of the world unexplained by a society's basic categories of understanding, thereby threatening the social order; contrasted with purity.

polyandry Mating or marriage involving one woman and more than one man.

polygenesis The doctrine that human races constitute separate species with separate origins and innate differences; contrasted with monogenesis.

polygenic Variation in phenotype affected by the action of many genes.

polysemous Having more than one meaning or significance.

polytheism The belief in multiple deities; contrasted with monotheism.

positivism The view that science is objective and value-free.

Positivism The scientific philosophy of Auguste Comte.

postcolonial perspective The anthropological study of how the legacy of colonialism has altered both the former colonizing and the former colonized states.

postmodern Pertaining to postmodernism, the intellectual stance that experience is subjective and no one version of it can be authoritative.

post-processual archaeology Postmodern-era archaeology critical of the New Archaeology; also called contextual archaeology.

post-structural An adjective that expresses disenchantment with static, mechanistic, and controlling models of culture, with a consequent interest in social process and agency.

potlatch A Pacific Northwest Native ceremony characterized by conspicuous exchange and consumption of goods.

practice (or praxis) According to Pierre Bourdieu, the concept that society is constructed by purposeful, creative agents who bring society to life through talk and action.

Prague School A school of linguists based in Prague that pioneered the analysis of phonemes.

prehistory The period of human existence before writing.

primal patricide In Sigmund Freud's hypothetical primeval family, the killing of the father by his sons.

primary cultural institutions In psychodynamic anthropology, institutions that affect how children are raised and that shape basic personality structure.

primeval family In Sigmund Freud's reconstruction of human history, the first family form—monogamous, nuclear, and patriarchal.

primitive communism In some versions of Marxism, the view that past primitive peoples lived in a state to which future communism will, in a fashion, return.

processual archaeology A name post-processual archaeologists use for the nomothetic New Archaeology.

profane According to Émile Durkheim, that which is routine, mundane, impure, and "of the world"; contrasted with the sacred.

progress The movement of humanity from a perceived inferior toward a perceived superior state.

projective systems In the psychological anthropological model of John Whiting and Irvin Child, the equivalent of Abram Kardiner's secondary cultural institutions without Freudian components.

proletariat In the lexicon of Marxism, the working class.

proxemics The scientific study of posture as a form of non-verbal communication, sometimes called "body language."

psyche According to Sigmund Freud, the subconscious, comprising the id, ego, and superego.

psychic unity The doctrine that all peoples have the same fundamental capacity for change.

psychodynamic Pertaining to the school of psychological anthropology that adopted certain elements of the psychology of Sigmund Freud; often called Freudian anthropology.

psychological anthropology Anthropology concerned with the relationship between cultures and personalities.

public anthropology An anthropology primarily and directly engaged with public issues.

pundit A person deemed to be authoritative who renders opinions publicly, frequently by way of the mass and electronic media.

purity According to Mary Douglas, the ideal of a seamless social order symbolically excluding that which threatens a society's basic categories of understanding; contrasted with pollution.

racial memory According to Sigmund Freud, the subconscious awareness of the history of the human psyche.

racism A variously defined label for views that differences among human races are relatively fixed by nature and can be ranked from inferior to superior.

rationalized According to Max Weber, evolved through the systematization of ideas, corresponding norms of behaviours, and motivational commitment to those norms.

reality principle According to Sigmund Freud, the principle of realizing that acting on the pleasure principle is dangerous and immature.

reason The exercise of human cognitive functions independent or semi-independent of experience.

reciprocal altruism In sociobiology, the "biological Golden Rule," said to account for altruistic behaviour among non-relatives.

reciprocity According to Marcel Mauss, the elementary principle of exchanging gifts; according to Claude Lévi-Strauss, the elementary principle of exchanging women.

reflexivity A popular postmodern analytical strategy of reflecting on the biases and assumptions that inform one's own theories and perspectives.

relatively non-privileged A phrase coined by Max Weber to describe those socioeconomic classes in complex societies most prone to the creation of new social forms.

religion An integrated system of meanings and practices that seeks to connect humankind and nature with a divine or metaphysical order.

repressive hypothesis A conventional term for the historical process in which ideas about "normal" sexual expression came to have social power over sexual behaviour and mores in Western society.

restricted exchange According to Claude Lévi-Strauss, the exchange of women between two kinship groups.

revitalization movement A term coined by Anthony F.C. Wallace to describe the spontaneous evolution of culture that occurs when communities experience conditions of extreme social and economic duress or marginalization.

Rhodes-Livingstone Institute A research institute in Zambia that conducted much ethnographic research in the final years of British colonialism, later called the Zambian National Research Institute.

ritual Any form of prescribed behaviour that is periodically repeated and links the actions of the individual or group to a metaphysical order of existence.

ritual process Arnold van Gennep's term for the tripartite nature of ritual, involving separation from society, transition to a new social status, and a new incorporation into society.

rituals of rebellion A phrase coined by Max Gluckman to describe the socially constructive role of ritual in helping to avoid real conflict.

ruling class In the theory of dialectical materialism, the class that controls the means of production.

Russian social anthropology A term now used by some Russian anthropologists to distinguish current social and cultural research in the region from the outmoded Soviet ethnology, which imposed a framework of dialectical materialism on all research.

sacred According to Émile Durkheim, that which is pure, powerful, and supernatural; contrasted with the profane.

salvage ethnography Ethnography motivated by the need to obtain information about cultures threatened with extinction or assimilation.

salvation According to Max Weber, escape from worldly capriciousness and evil through social arrangements rationalized in accordance with a divine plan, typically revealed by charismatic prophets.

Sapir-Whorf hypothesis The proposition of Edward Sapir and Benjamin Whorf that the structure of language conditions the nature of cultural meaning.

savagery, barbarism, and civilization A popular nineteenth-century tripartite schema for the universal evolution of humanity.

science A system of thought that prioritizes nature contrasted with humankind and with a divine or metaphysical order.

scientific racism Improper or incorrect science that actively or passively supports racism.

scientific revolution According to Thomas Kuhn, the replacement of one scientific paradigm with another.

secondary cultural institutions In psychodynamic anthropology, social institutions that are projections of basic personality structure and help people cope with the world.

second law of thermodynamics The scientific proposition that the universe is running down, thereby increasing disorder, or entropy.

secularization theory A body of research and theory within sociology and political science that assumes the demise of religion in a modernizing world.

semantic domain A mental domain of cultural meaning that is the focus of inquiry in cognitive anthropology.

semiotic Pertaining to the relationship between symbols and what they represent.

seriationally According to the archaeological principle of seriation, or relative dating by the evolution of artifact style.

sexual selection Charles Darwin's evolutionary mechanism whereby members of one sex compete for the attention of members of the opposite sex.

shamans Magico-religious specialists who communicate with ancestral ghosts and other spirits.

sign In Ferdinand de Saussure's linguistics, the pair formed in the relation of a signifier to a signified, the essence of relations among meaningful units in a language.

signified In Ferdinand de Saussure's linguistics, one of two units making up the sign, the concept generated in our minds when represented by a sound or image, the signifier.

signifier In Ferdinand de Saussure's linguistics, one of two units making up the sign, the word or image that represents a concept, the signified.

Silicon Valley A name given to the southern end of the San Francisco Bay area in northern California, specifically to the Santa Clara Valley, which has been among the most fertile centres of the high-tech industry.

Silicon Valley Cultures Project Founded in 1991 by anthropologists at San Jose

State University, a project conducting long-term, multi-sited research into high-technology communities and workplaces, the use of information technology, and the heterogeneous cultural worlds that connect workers and residents with the region's high-tech industry and economy.

social constructionism The theory that sociocultural phenomena are products of historically situated interpersonal negotiation accomplished through patterned language and activity.

Social Darwinism A loosely used term referring to social philosophies based on Darwinian evolutionism, especially the mechanism of natural selection.

social dynamics In Positivism, the study of social change.

social facts Émile Durkheim's name for social phenomena, his units of sociological analysis.

social function In British social anthropology, the contribution of a part of society to the whole of society; sometimes called social physiology.

social morphology In British social anthropology, according to the organismic analogy, the study of social structure.

social physiology In British social anthropology, according to the organismic analogy, the study of social function.

social process According to late structural-functionalism, social change as the ongoing creation of a fluid, dynamic social structure.

social statics In Positivism, the study of social stability.

social structure In British social anthropology, the social matrix of behaviour; sometimes called social morphology.

sociobiology An investigation of the biological basis of social behaviour using the evolutionary principles of kin selection and inclusive fitness.

solipsism The idea that the individual self is the only reality and that the

external world exists only in one's imagination.

Sophistry An ancient Greek school of thought that attached greater importance to practical skills and social effectiveness than to the search for objective knowledge and absolute truth.

Southwest School A group of German philosophers who differentiated human sciences, or *Geisteswissenschaften*, and natural sciences, or *Naturwissenschaften*.

species A group of organisms whose members can reproduce only with one another.

specific evolution In the cultural evolutionary schema of Marshall Sahlins and Elman Service, the study of how cultures differentiate by adapting to local environments.

status societies In the schema of Henry Maine, societies that are family-oriented, hold property in common, and maintain control by social sanctions; contrasted with contract societies.

Stoicism An ancient school of thought that believed that nature and society are intrinsically orderly, allowing particular societies to be compared and contrasted in accordance with universal principles.

Stone Age The Old Stone Age, or Paleolithic, and the New Stone Age, or Neolithic.

Stonewall Riots A series of spontaneous civil protests by gay and lesbian activists in the wake of a June 1969 police raid on the Stonewall Inn, a gay nightclub in the Greenwich Village district of New York City.

stratigraphy The archaeological dating of artifacts relative to their placement in systematically layered earth.

structural-functionalism In British social anthropology, the synchronic concern with social structure and social function.

structuralism In British social anthropology, the synchronic concern with

social structure, sometimes called social morphology; in French structural anthropology, the concern with the elementary forms of minds and cultures.

structural Marxists Proponents of a theoretical blend of Marxism, dialectical philosophy, and French structural anthropology.

structure of the conjuncture Marshall Sahlins's phrase describing the space of intersection between different cultural structures, where contingency produces historical change.

struggle for existence Charles Darwin's view that evolution by natural selection involves competition for limited resources and results in survival of the fittest.

subconscious According to Sigmund Freud, the part of the mind that is the seat of the psyche, of which people are aware only unconsciously.

sublimate According to Sigmund Freud, to rechannel libidinous desires into culturally acceptable thoughts and behaviours.

substantivists Economic anthropologists who maintained that Western economic concepts do not apply to non-Western economies; contrasted with formalists.

sui generis In its own realm, or on its own terms.

superego According to Sigmund Freud, the part of the psyche, sometimes called conscience, that monitors the id and mediates between the ego and the outside world.

superorganic The idea that culture is distinct from and "above" biology.

survival of the fittest In Charles Darwin's theory of evolution by natural selection, the adaptive outcome of the struggle for existence.

survivals Edward Burnett Tylor's name for nonfunctional cultural traits that are inherited from past generations.

swamping effect The observation in Charles Darwin's time that small variations would always be diluted by heredity and therefore could not increase or intensify through natural selection.

symbolic anthropology The anthropological school, associated with Victor Turner, espousing the view that social solidarity is a function of the systems of symbolic logic that connect people.

symbolic capital According to Pierre Bourdieu, the body of meanings, representations, and objects held to be prestigious or valuable to a social group.

symbolic domination According to Pierre Bourdieu, the tendency of dominant social groups to create and sustain a world view in which all members of a society, including subjugated members, participate.

symbolic interactionism A sociological theory, associated with Talcott Parsons, that focuses on the decision-making strategies of individuals in social situations; similar to transactionalism.

sympathetic magic Magic that can affect an object through a similar object.

synchronic Concerned with the present more than the past; contrasted with diachronic.

synthetic philosophy The all-encompassing philosophy of Herbert Spencer based on the premise that homogeneity is evolving into heterogeneity everywhere.

Synthetic Theory of Evolution The twentieth-century theoretical synthesis of Darwinian evolutionism and Mendelian genetics.

taboos Culturally prescribed prohibitions.

tabula rasa Translated "blank slate," the idea that the mind acquires knowledge through experience rather than recognizes knowledge that is innate.

taxonomies According to Pierre Bourdieu, internalized symbolic

representations that make the social world what it is for people who live in it.

teleology The idea that biological evolution adheres to a long-term purpose or goal.

text In the interpretive anthropology of Clifford Geertz, the equivalent of culture, interpreted through a process of thick description.

theistic Pertaining to theism, the view that God created the universe and remains active in its day-to-day operations; contrasted with deistic.

theodicy A Christian term used by Max Weber to describe the explanation of evil in the world despite the existence of an omnipotent, just, and loving God.

thermodynamic law $E \times T > P$, or energy times technology yields cultural product, the nomothetic basis of Leslie White's culturology.

thermodynamics The study of conversion of energy in the universe, a fundamental part of culturology as expressed in the second law of thermodynamics.

thesis-antithesis-synthesis In dialectical materialism, Friedrich Hegel's form for dialectical change.

thick description In the interpretive anthropology of Clifford Geertz, the process of interpreting culture as text.

Third Gender A widely used term that denotes both the existence of non-binary gender identities and the general fluidity of gender as a cultural formation.

Thomistic Christianity The theology of Thomas Aquinas, which unified scientific, humanistic, and religious ways of knowing.

Three Age System The archaeological ages of Stone, Bronze, and Iron.

totems Objects of collective cultural veneration, according to several

anthropological theorists, that are central to the maintenance of social stability.

transactionalism The anthropological theory of Fredrik Barth that focuses on the decision-making and economic-maximizing strategies of individuals; similar to symbolic interactionism.

transcendental essences The concept of ancient Greek philosopher Plato that the pure ideas of objects are more real than the varied individual manifestations of those ideas.

transgender The designation of personal and social identities that do not conform to conventional or normative ideas about appropriate gender and sex roles within a society.

transmigrate To pass into another body after death, as do spirits and ghosts.

truthy A satirical term coined by television personality Stephen Colbert to describe the implicit acceptance of a proposition where logic dictates otherwise or where there is a seeming lack of supporting evidence.

Two Spirit Since 1990, a term used by many Native Americans to designate individuals in Aboriginal societies who elide the gender binary of man–woman.

typological thinking Thinking of biological groups as homogeneous or pure when in fact they are heterogeneous and mixed.

Umma An Arabic word for “community,” often used to designate the global diasporic Islamic “nation,” a community of the faithful.

underdevelopment A condition that in the opinion of many political economists is actually caused rather than ameliorated by international development initiatives.

uniformitarianism The doctrine that gradual geological agents of change have operated throughout the past; contrasted with catastrophism.

unilineal Pertaining to the view that cultural evolution proceeds along the

same lines everywhere, as in classical cultural evolution; contrasted with multilineal and universal evolution.

unilineal kinship systems Kinship systems reckoned through one parental line, either matrilineal or patrilineal.

universal Pertaining to a single schema for global cultural evolution; contrasted with unilineal and multilineal evolution.

universal historians Enlightenment thinkers who promulgated comprehensive laws and schemas of human history.

universal pattern In cultural materialism, the levels of culture—infrastructure, structure, and superstructure—with emic and etic and mental and behavioural dimensions.

vitalism The idea that biological evolution is self-motivated or willed.

Volksgeist Translated “spirit of the people,” according to some early theorists the ethnographic essence of a people.

Vulcanists Geologists who proposed that major geological changes were caused by the elevation of land brought about by volcanic heat; contrasted with Neptunists.

vulgar materialists A label for cultural materialists who, according to their critics, ignore dialectical thinking.

weapons of mass destruction Or WMDs, the euphemistic term for weapon technologies with the potential to cause casualties on a massive scale, for example, biological, chemical, and nuclear weapons.

Web 2.0 A phrase coined in the mid-2000s to describe the development of new online tools and platforms that enable the creation and distribution of user-generated content, for instance blogs, wikis, and social networking websites.

world anthropologies A term referring to the existence or potential existence of different forms of anthropological theory and professional practice,

rooted in different cultural and linguistic traditions around the world.

World of Warcraft Also known by its acronym WoW, among the largest of multiplayer online role-playing games, set in a faux-medieval, Tolkienesque fantasy world where players adopt the online personas of fantasy characters, undertake quests and journeys, meet other players, and combat fantasy creatures and monsters.

world-system According to political economists, the global expansion of Western capitalism, creating a world-system of unequal commodity exchange.

world-system theory Immanuel Wallerstein's theory that core nation-states are engaged in the systematic exploitation of peripheral nation-states for labour and natural resources.

xenophobic Pertaining to xenophobia, the fear and dislike of foreigners.

Y2K Also known as "the Millennium Bug," an acronym for the Year 2000, referring both to a computer technology problem and to the consequent social panic that emerged in the run-up to the year 2000.

Sources and Suggested Reading

This list of sources and suggested reading comprises citations of books (and a very few articles) culled from a vast literature in the history of anthropological theory. The list concentrates on secondary sources, or sources written *about* the past, but includes some primary sources, or sources written *in* the past (in a few instances near the present). Readers may wish to search the Internet for additional sources. If, at the time of preparing the list, a book was in print, its latest published citation was used. If a book was out of print, its citation was derived from another book or from the book itself. Although many books are relevant to more than one part of *A History of Anthropological Theory*, they are almost always listed only once. Some original or earlier dates of publication appear in square brackets. For certain reprint editions, dates appear in brackets only.

Part One: The Early History of Anthropological Theory

Anthropology in Antiquity

Campbell, Gordon Lindsay. 2006. *Strange Creatures: Anthropology in Antiquity*. London: Gerald Duckworth & Co.

An exploration of ancient ideas of the creation of the world from Greco-Roman times to Europeans' encounter with the Americas.

Cole, Thomas. 1967. *Democritus and the Sources of Greek Anthropology*. Cleveland: Western Reserve University Press.

A study of the roots of anthropology in antiquity, focusing on an early Greek philosopher of materialism.

Darnell, Regna, ed. 1974. *Readings in the History of Anthropology*. New York: Harper and Row.

A collection of primary sources, including some from ancient times.

Edelstein, Ludwig. 1967. *The Idea of Progress in Classical Antiquity*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

An examination of the ancient foundations of an idea intertwined with the history of anthropological theory.

Gernet, Louis. 1981. *The Anthropology of Ancient Greece*. Ann Arbor, MI: Books on

Demand.

An informative study of the ancient roots of anthropology.

Humphreys, S.C. 1984. *Anthropology and the Greeks*. New York: Routledge.

A book of anthropology in and about Greece.

Kluckhohn, Clyde. 1961. *Anthropology and the Classics*. Ann Arbor, MI: Books on Demand.

A study of the ancient roots of anthropology by a distinguished American anthropologist.

Launay, Robert, ed. 2010. *Foundations of Anthropological Theory: From Classical Antiquity to Early Modern Europe*. Indianapolis: Wiley-Blackwell.

A selection of original writings by early social theorists from Herodotus to Adam Ferguson, including Muslim theorists.

Malefijt, Annemarie de Waal. 1974. *Images of Man: A History of Anthropological Thought*. New York: Alfred Knopf.

An intellectual and social history of anthropological theory beginning in classical times.

Sassi, Maria Michela. 2001. *The Science of Man in Ancient Greece*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

An examination of ancient Greeks' attempts to answer questions about human nature, especially questions about human differences.

Snowden, Frank M., Jr. 1991. *Before Color Prejudice: The Ancient View of Blacks*.

Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

A historical study of the cultural contexts of race and racism.

Voget, Fred W. 1975. *A History of Ethnology*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

A compendium of ethnological developments, beginning in antiquity and extending into the twentieth century.

The Middle Ages

Boas, George. 1966. *Essays on Primitivism and Related Ideas in the Middle Ages*. New York: Octagon Books.

Analyses of ideas that have influenced—and, in turn, been influenced by—anthropology.

Brehaut, Ernest. 1964. *An Encyclopedist of the Dark Ages, Isidore of Seville*. New York: B. Franklin.

A biographical account of the life and times of one of the most influential early Christian historians.

Friedman, John B. 1963. *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought*. Ann Arbor, MI: Books on Demand.
A historical account of the anthropologically exotic.

Lovejoy, Arthur O. 1936. *Great Chain of Being: A Study of the History of an Idea*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
An analysis of a philosophical schema that prevailed during the Middle Ages and shaped anthropology.

Mahdi, Muhsin. 1957. *Ibn Khaldûn's Philosophy of History: A Study in the Philosophic Foundation of the Science of Culture*. London: G. Allen and Unwin.
An analysis of the work of a medieval Islamic historian who described Arab and Bedouin culture "scientifically."

The Renaissance

Allen, Don C. 1963. *The Legend of Noah: Renaissance Rationalism in Art, Science and Letters*. Ann Arbor, MI: Books on Demand.
An analysis of Renaissance thought that highlights Christianity.

Davis, Thomas W. 2004. *Shifting Sands: The Rise and Fall of Biblical Archaeology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
A history of archaeology and archaeologists interested in biblical scholarship.

Dudley, Edward J., and Maximillian E. Novak, eds. 1972. *The Wild Man Within: An Image in Western Thought from the Renaissance to Romanticism*. Ann Arbor, MI: Books on Demand.
The history of an image incorporated into many anthropological portrayals of non-Western peoples.

Höfele, Andreas, and Stephen Langu  , eds. 2011. *Humankinds: The Renaissance and Its Anthropologies*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1515/9783110258318>
A sustained argument that European continental philosophical and Anglo-American cultural anthropologies are both rooted in Renaissance efforts to define what it means to be human.

Levin, Harry. 1969. *The Myth of the Golden Age in the Renaissance*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
An examination of the Renaissance discovery of Greco-Roman glories.

Penrose, Boies. 1955. *Travel and Discovery in the Renaissance, 1420–1620*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
An account of the early phases of European global exploration.

- Piggott, Stuart. 1989. *Ancient Britons and Antiquarian Imagination*. New York: Thames and Hudson.
A distinguished British archaeologist writes about the development of antiquarianism in the Renaissance.
- Trigger, Bruce. 1990. *A History of Archaeological Thought*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
A comprehensive history of archaeology, beginning with classical Renaissance historicism.

Voyages of Geographical Discovery

- Banton, Michael. 1998. *Racial Theories*. 2nd ed. New York: Cambridge University Press.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511583407>
A revised edition of a study that demonstrates how eighteenth- and nineteenth-century scientists viewed races as permanent “types,” featuring a new chapter on race as a social construct.
- Berkhofer, Robert F., Jr. 1979. *The White Man’s Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present*. New York: Random House.
A history of American Indians as seen through the eyes of “whites.”
- Bieder, Robert E. 1986. *Science Encounters the Indian, 1820–1880: The Early Years of American Ethnology*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.
A history of early American ethnology shaped by interactions between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations.
- Burgaleta, Claudio M. 1999. *Jose de Acosta, S.J. (1540–1600): His Life and Thought*. Chicago: Loyola Press.
A biography of the Jesuit humanist and missionary, who, according to the author, helped establish the foundation for later “liberation” theologies.
- Campbell, Mary B. 1988. *The Witness and the Other World: Exotic European Travel Writing, 400–1600*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
An examination of the early phase of European geographical exploration.
- Cohen, William B. 1980. *The French Encounter with Africans: White Response to Blacks, 1530–1880*. Ann Arbor, MI: Books on Demand.
A history of French attitudes toward Africans in the early colonial period.
- Curtin, Philip D. 1964. *The Image of Africa: British Ideas and Action, 1780–1850*. Ann Arbor, MI: Books on Demand.
A history of British attitudes toward Africans in the early colonial period.

- Dickason, Olive Patricia. 1984. *The Myth of the Savage and the Beginnings of French Colonialism in the Americas*. Edmonton: University of Alberta Press.
An account of how early French perceptions of Aboriginal Americans influenced French colonialism.
- Dussel, Enrique. 1995. *The Invention of the Americas: Eclipse of "The Other" and the Myth of Modernity*. New York: Continuum.
An account of the origin of an anthropological image of America.
- Fabian, Johannes. 2002. *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object*. New York: Columbia University Press.
A critical anthropological account of how Anglo-American and French anthropologists have treated the concept of time, including the ethnographic present.
- Garbarino, Merwyn S. 1983. *Sociocultural Theory in Anthropology: A Short History*. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press.
A concise history of major sociocultural theories beginning with the period of European geographical exploration.
- Hammond, Dorothy, and Alta Jablow. 1992. *The Africa that Never Was: Four Centuries of British Writing about Africa—An Anthropological View Contrasting the Africa of Fact and the Africa of Fiction*. Rev. ed. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press.
A revisionist history of the British depiction of Africa.
- Hanzeli, Victor E. 1969. *Missionary Linguistics in New France: A Study of Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Descriptions of American Indian Languages*. The Hague: Mouton.
An assessment of the linguistic writings of early French missionaries in America.
- Hodgen, Margaret T. 1964. *Early Anthropology in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
Accounts of anthropology in the early modern period.
- Huddleston, Lee Eldridge. 1967. *Origins of American Indians: European Concepts, 1492–1729*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
A history of early European attempts to explain the origin of American Indians.
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An account of how changes in Africa have interacted with changing anthropological views of Africa.
- Pagden, Anthony. 1987. *The Fall of Natural Man: The American Indian and the Origins of Comparative Ethnology*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

An account of how Europeans' early perceptions of American Indians affected both populations.

Schwartz, Stuart B., ed. 1994. *Implicit Understandings: Observing, Reporting and Reflecting on the Encounters between Europeans and Other Peoples in the Early Modern Era*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
Analyses of early encounters between Europeans and non-Europeans.

Stocking, George W., Jr., ed. 1993. *Colonial Situations: Essays on the Contextualization of Ethnographic Knowledge*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
Analyses of anthropology in the context of colonialism.

Wauchope, Robert. 1962. *Lost Tribes and Sunken Continents: Myth and Method in the Study of American Indians*. Ann Arbor, MI: Books on Demand.
An account of early theories linking American Indians to Europeans.

The Scientific Revolution

Hall, Marie Boas. 1962. *Scientific Renaissance, 1450–1630*. New York: Harper.
A history of key developments in the Scientific Revolution.

Henry, John. 1997. *The Scientific Revolution and the Origins of Modern Science*. Old Tappan, NJ: Macmillan.
A concise history of the Scientific Revolution.

Hull, David. 1990. *Science as Process: An Evolutionary Account of the Social and Conceptual Development of Science*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
An account of how science develops in social contexts.

Kaznar, Lawrence A. 2008. *Reclaiming a Scientific Anthropology*. 2nd ed. Plymouth: AltaMira Press.
An examination of recent advances in science accompanied by a critique of postmodernism, arguing that anthropology should return to its empirical roots.

Kuhn, Thomas S. 1970. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. 2nd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
An influential history of the Scientific Revolution as a shift of paradigms.

Lindberg, David C., and Robert S. Westman, eds. 1990. *Reappraisals of the Scientific Revolution*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Thirteen scholars across a wide range of subjects re-evaluate the social context and consequences of the Scientific Revolution from the perspective of three decades ago.

Marks, Jonathan. 2009. *Why I Am Not a Scientist: Anthropology and Modern Knowledge*.

Berkeley: University of California Press.

An outspoken biological anthropologist explains what science is, why popular understandings of science are difficult to reconcile with one another, and what a scientific anthropology might look like in the twenty-first century.

Tambiah, Stanley Jeyaraja. 1990. *Magic, Science, Religion, and the Scope of Rationality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

An anthropological reconsideration of the classic distinction among magic, science, and religion, with reference to debates among these three positions during the Scientific Revolution.

The Enlightenment

Berry, Christopher J. 1997. *Social Theory of the Scottish Enlightenment*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

An examination of cultural and historical theorizing in Scotland between 1740 and 1790, updating Gladys Bryson's *Man and Society* (see below).

Bryson, Gladys. 1968 [1945]. *Man and Society: The Scottish Inquiry of the Eighteenth Century*. New York: Augustus M. Kelly. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/13558-000>

An examination of Scottish Enlightenment contributions to anthropology.

Cloyd, E.L. 1972. *James Burnett, Lord Monboddo*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

A biography of an Enlightenment thinker who thought that a properly conditioned ape could learn to talk like a human being.

Daiches, David, Peter Jones, and Jean Jones, eds. 1986. *A Hotbed of Genius: The Scottish Enlightenment, 1730–1790*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

An intellectual history of the Scottish Enlightenment.

Danesi, Marcel, ed. 1995. *Giambattista Vico and Anglo-American Science: Philosophy and Writing*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1515/9783110881349>

An assessment of the contributions of the influential Italian Enlightenment thinker.

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An ethnographic classic about the contested nature of political and economic organization in the Swat valley of Pakistan.

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A classic volume of essays on the processes involved in the construction of ethnic identities and boundaries in which individual social actors are shown to maximize their own economic advantage.
- Blumer, Herbert. 1986 [1937]. *Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
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- Paine, Robert. 1994. *Herds of the Tundra: A Portrait of Saami Reindeer Pastoralism*. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press.
An ethnographic account of Saami pastoralism in Norway and the effects of government efforts to control it.

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- Boddy, Janice. 1989. *Wombs and Alien Spirits: Women, Men, and the Zâr Cult in Northern Sudan*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
This feminist ethnography looks at how Islamic ideals of feminine purity conflict with local women’s desire for empowerment, as manifested in spirit possession.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. 2001. *Masculine Domination*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
The famous French theorist explains masculine domination as a form of symbolic violence endemic in everyday life.
- Cattell, Maria G., and Marjorie M. Schweitzer, eds. 2006. *Women in Anthropology: Autobiographical Narratives and Social History*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.
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politics, practices, psychology, and sexualities connected to expressions of masculinity in a variety of contexts.

Di Leonardo, Micaela. 1991. *Gender at the Crossroads of Knowledge: Feminist Anthropology in the Postmodern Era*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
A broad range of essays that examine the effects of feminist scholarship on the study of race, biology, language, culture, and economy.

Foucault, Michel. 1990 [1978]. *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: An Introduction (The Will to Knowledge)*. New York: Vintage Books.

The first in seminal social theorist and historian Michel Foucault's three-part "archaeology" of human sexuality, in which Foucault deconstructs what he calls the "repressive hypothesis," according to which all talk of human sexuality is believed to have been suppressed in Western culture from the seventeenth through the twentieth centuries.

Geller, Pamela L., and Miranda K. Stockett, eds. 2006. *Feminist Anthropology: Past, Present, Future*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

An edited collection in which contributors explore the contentious history and current state of feminist anthropology, attempting to break new epistemological ground.

Herdt, Gilbert. 2005. *The Sambia: Ritual, Sexuality, and Change in Papua New Guinea*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing.

In this well-known example of contemporary studies in non-Western sexual practices and meanings, the Sambian ritualization of adolescent homosexuality followed by permanent adult heterosexuality provokes questions about sexual orientation as a feature of evolutionary selection.

Keohane, Nannerl O., Michelle Z. Rosaldo, and Barbara C. Gelpi, eds. 1982. *Feminist Theory: A Critique of Ideology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

A collection of essays that examine the relations among feminist theory, science, language, nationality, and other social institutions.

Lewin, Ellen, ed. 2006. *Feminist Anthropology: A Reader*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.

A compendium of classic and contemporary ethnographic essays that traces the history of feminist scholarship within anthropology.

Lyons, Andrew P., and Harriet D. Lyons, eds. 2011. *Sexualities in Anthropology: A Reader*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.

An edited collection that surveys the historical development of approaches to sexuality from within anthropology, with contributions ranging from nineteenth-century evolutionist to functionalist, structuralist, and symbolic approaches, and with contemporary contributors addressing a range of issues of concern to twenty-first century anthropology, including the politics of sexual orientation and genital cutting.

- Moore, Henrietta L. 1988. *Feminism and Anthropology*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
A theoretical study of the gendered character of kinship, domestic life, and the state.
- Olson, Gary A., and Elizabeth Hirsch, eds. 1995. *Women Writing Culture*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
A collection of interviews with leading feminist scholars who view language and literature as “sites” for the social construction of gendered knowledge.
- Ortner, Sherry B. 1997. *Making Gender: The Politics and Erotics of Culture*. Boston: Beacon Press.
A collection of essays in which social differences and hierarchy between men and women are explored in relation to broader ideas about “nature” versus “culture.”
- . 2006. *Anthropology and Social Theory: Culture, Power, and the Acting Subject*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
The well-known feminist scholar and theoretician presents her views on critical anthropological issues.
- , and Harriet Whitehead, eds. 1981. *Sexual Meanings: The Cultural Construction of Gender and Sexuality*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
Essays on political and cultural contexts for the social construction of gender difference in Western and non-Western societies.
- Oyewùmí, Oyèrónké. 1997. *The Invention of Women: Making an African Sense of Western Gender Discourses*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
Oyewùmí deconstructs the Western category of “women,” arguing that its underlying biological determinism does not feature in the social organization of Yoruban society.
- Pascoe, C.J. 2011. *Dude You’re a Fag: Masculinity and Sexuality in High School*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
This innovative ethnography looks at how masculinity and male sexuality are discursively and practically constructed in a racially diverse American high school.
- Reiter, Rayna R., ed. 1975. *Toward an Anthropology of Women*. New York: Monthly Review Press.
A key text in feminist anthropology in which contributors criticize androcentric epistemology and look to develop new models that reconceptualize the place of women across various societies.
- Rosaldo, Michelle Zimbalist, and Louise Lamphere, eds. 1974. *Woman, Culture and Society*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
A seminal collection of essays that explore the structural contexts and constraints underpinning gender differences.

Strathern, Marilyn. 1987. "An Awkward Relationship: The Case of Feminism and Anthropology." *Signs* 12.2: 276–92. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1086/494321>
A theoretical essay exploring the boundaries between feminism as a discrete discipline and anthropology as a Western field of scholarship that ostensibly promotes, but simultaneously homogenizes, diversity.

———. 1988. *The Gender of the Gift: Problems with Women and Problems with Society in Melanesia*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1525/california/9780520064232.001.0001>
An ethnographic study of the politics of gift-exchange and gender relations in Melanesia.

Valentine, David. 2007. *Imagining Transgender: An Ethnography of a Category*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
This study investigates the institutionalization of the term "transgender" to denote collective identity and the politics of a marginalized community, with Valentine tracking the growth in the term's popularity as a category of belonging and activism in 1990s' New York City.

Visweswaran, Kamala. 1997. "Histories of Feminist Ethnography." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 26.1: 591–621. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1146/annurev.anthro.26.1.591>
A historical overview of the development of feminist anthropology from the late nineteenth through the end of the twentieth centuries, paying special attention to the changing conceptual relationship between "gender" and "sex."

Political Economy

Ahluwalia, Pal, and Bill Ashcroft. 2008. *Edward Said*. New York: Routledge.
A brief, accessible introduction to the theory and politics of Edward Said.

Asad, Talal, ed. 1973. *Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter*. Ithaca, NY: Ithaca Press.
Among the earliest and best-known explorations of anthropology in relation to Western colonialism, a book crucial in raising awareness among anthropologists.

———. 2007. *On Suicide Bombing*. New York: Columbia University Press.
The eminent scholar of religious and secular cultural traditions tackles complexities surrounding this headline news.

Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, eds. 1995. *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*. London: Routledge.
A significant interdisciplinary compilation of 90 important essays in the field of postcolonial studies, essays that represent less a "canon" than a cross-section of current debates and foci within the field.

- Dhareshwar, Vivek. 1998. "Valorizing the Present: Orientalism, Postcoloniality, and the Human Sciences." *Cultural Dynamics* 10.2: 211–31.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/092137409801000208>
A short but theoretically sophisticated analysis of the problems that accrue to theorizing cultural difference and "otherness" in the postcolonial world, especially in terms of the shortcomings of Western epistemology.
- Dirks, Nicholas B., Geoff Eley, and Sherry B. Ortner, eds. 1993. *Culture/Power/ History: A Reader in Contemporary Social Theory*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
A collection of essays on the recent history of anthropology, including one by Ortner that is very useful for situating the theoretical developments that led to the rise of political economy in the 1970s.
- Fine, Ben. 2001. *Social Capital versus Social Theory: Political Economy and Social Science at the Turn of the Millennium*. London: Routledge.
An interesting blend of the theories of political economy and Pierre Bourdieu's concept of social, or symbolic, capital.
- McCarthy, Connor. 2010. *The Cambridge Introduction to Edward Said*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
McCarthy explores the relationship between the public and private lives of one of the most famous recent public intellectuals.
- Mintz, Sidney W. 1986. *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History*. New York: Penguin Books.
A fascinating historical study of the powerful effect that sugar and the sugar-trade have had in forming new European cultural meanings and political and economic relationships.
- Polanyi, Karl. 1944. *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time*. Boston: Beacon Press.
The landmark analysis of the social implication of the rise of the market economy, written by a scholar associated with the substantivist side of the substantivist-formalist debate in anthropology.
- Redfield, Robert. 1971 [1956]. *Peasant Society and Culture: An Anthropological Approach to Civilization*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Redfield's proto-political economy looks at the continuum between "folk" and "urban" traditions in Mexico.
- Roseberry, William. 1989. *Anthropologies and Histories: Essays in Culture, History, and Political Economy*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
A well-known collection of essays in which Roseberry looks at the relationship between capitalism and the historical formation of social and political power, as well as

the role power has played in shaping cultural meaning and practice.

Said, Edward W. 1978. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books.

Arguably the seminal text in postcolonial studies, authored by its most celebrated exponent.

———. 1994. *Culture and Imperialism*. New York: Vintage Books.

Said explores the role of literature in forging a sense of a distinctly Western culture and, by extension, what is excluded from it, showing how fiction and media were used over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as tools for expanding and deepening Western empires, and likewise by colonial subjects endeavouring to make their own voices heard.

Schneider, Peter, and Jane Schneider. 1986. *Culture and Political Economy in Western Sicily*. Orlando, FL: Academic Press.

The Schneiders explore the way in which rural Italian underdevelopment and alienation of the south from the north produced local conditions in which new forms of local economy could flourish, in particular the Sicilian Mafia.

Spanos, William V. 2009. *The Legacy of Edward W. Said*. Champaign: University of Illinois Press.

A thought-provoking assessment of Said's contributions to post-structural theory, particularly as his work may be assessed in relation to other theorists of his generation such as Michel Foucault, Martin Heidegger, Jacques Derrida, and Jacques Lacan.

Taussig, Michael T. 1980. *The Devil and Commodity Fetishism in South America*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

A widely read ethnography in anthropological political economy that explores how Colombian peasants use locally meaningful symbolism and ritual to critique the powerful capitalist economic system in which they live.

Wallerstein, Immanuel. 1974. *The Modern World System: Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the World Economy in the Sixteenth Century*. Orlando, FL: Academic Press. Wallerstein's influential exposition of the expansive capitalist "world system," cast in terms of a "core" of consumers who control and exploit the labour and resources of a poor "periphery."

Warraq, Ibn. 2007. *Defending the West: A Critique of Edward Said's Orientalism*. Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books.

A trenchant critique of Orientalism, in which Warraq takes Said to task for misrepresenting both Western authors and the West's interaction with non-Western Others.

Wilcox, Clifford. 2006. *Robert Redfield and the Development of American Anthropology*.

Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.

A biography of the anthropologist who distinguished between “great” and “little” traditions.

Wolf, Eric R. 1982. *Europe and the People without History*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

A well-known study drawing on the ideas of Immanuel Wallerstein and André Gunder Frank to argue that local cultures around the world are not self-contained, but develop in a dialectical relationship with the expansive forces of global capitalism.

Postmodernity

Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso, 1991.

An influential work examining the broad historical conditions, notably the development of print-capitalism and the post-medieval voyages of discovery, that allowed nation-states to become “imagined” as new forms of community in Europe and its colonies.

Berger, Peter L., and Thomas Luckmann. 1967. *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*. New York: Doubleday.

An exposition of sociology that views the “real” as being the non-objective product of constructive processes, mainly language-related, in which people participate during daily life.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1977. *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Trans. Richard Nice. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Bourdieu’s best-known formulation of his theory of “practice” in which social unity and diversity are produced by creative, historically situated agents who actively structure and restructure their worlds of experience.

Clifford, James. 1988. *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Clifford’s reflections on how the possibility of an “objective” description of culture, and even its very definition or identification, are undermined by the powerful insight that ethnographies are textual artifice.

———, and George E. Marcus, eds. 1986. *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

The highly influential collection of essays that alerted anthropologists to the problematic character of “objectivist” research, proposing instead that ethnographies are cultural “texts” in which the ethnographer’s own subjectivities are deeply embedded.

Comaroff, John, and Jean Comaroff. 1992. *Ethnography and the Historical Imagination*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

An influential call to rethink basic tenets of the concepts of structure and function by focusing ethnographic attention on historical process and political-economic transformation.

Cussett, Francois. 2008. *French Theory: How Foucault, Derrida, Deleuze & Co. Transformed the Intellectual Life of the United States*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

A French perspective on the rollicking and often divisive impact of postmodern thinking on American academic and public intellectual life.

Dirks, Nicholas B., Geoff Eley, and Sherry B. Ortner, eds. 1993. *Culture/Power/ History: A Reader in Contemporary Social Theory*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

A collection of theoretical statements informed by post-structuralism, postmodernism, and the views of Michel Foucault and Pierre Bourdieu.

Feyerabend, Paul. 1993. *Against Method*. 3rd ed. London: Verso.

The third edition of Feyerabend's classic 1975 statement of philosophical anarchism.

Foucault, Michel. 1973 [1965]. *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*. Trans. Richard Howard. New York: Pantheon Books.

Foucault's landmark investigation into the contingent nature of, and historical trajectory behind, Western beliefs about the condition of "insanity" and treatment of the "insane."

———. 1982. *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. New York: Pantheon Books.

Foucault's outline of his argument that "knowledge" and "truth" are inexorably linked to social and political power, and that buried beneath the official discourse of modernity and civilization are to be found echoes of dissenting "voices."

Giddens, Anthony. 1979. *Central Problems in Social Theory: Action, Structure, and Contradiction in Social Analysis*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

A sophisticated theoretical treatment of the interrelations among power, social structure, and subjective agency.

Gramsci, Antonio. 1992. *Prison Notebooks*. Vol. 1. Trans. and ed. Joseph A. Buttigieg. New York: Columbia University Press.

Gramsci's perspectives on power, written while he was a prisoner, describing the ways in which power inscribes itself on and insinuates its way into social life.

———. 1996. *Prison Notebooks*. Vol. 2. Trans. and ed. Joseph A. Buttigieg. New York: Columbia University Press.

A continuation of Gramsci's study of power and hegemony.

- . 2007. *Prison Notebooks*. Vol. 3. Trans. and ed. Joseph A. Buttigieg. New York: Columbia University Press.
The third volume of Gramsci's study of power and hegemony.
- Grenfell, Michael. 2005. *Pierre Bourdieu: Agent Provocateur*. London: Continuum International.
An account of Bourdieu's views on many subjects, ranging from the Algerian war to capitalism.
- , ed. 2008. *Pierre Bourdieu: Key Concepts*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.
Experts explain Bourdieu's key concepts in terms accessible to both students and scholars.
- Hobsbawm, Eric J., and Terence Ranger, eds. 1992. *The Invention of Tradition*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
A collection of essays looking at the historical process behind the recent production of "ancient" traditions—such as Hugh Trevor-Roper's study of the Scottish kilt—and the general problem of what social purposes might be served by "inventing" history in this way.
- Johnson, Thomas M., and Carolyn F. Sargent, eds. *Medical Anthropology: A Handbook of Theory and Method*. New York: Greenwood Press, 1990.
A review of theory and method in medical anthropology and ethnomedicine, and a survey of different ethnomedical systems.
- Landy, David, ed. 1977. *Culture, Disease, and Healing: Studies in Medical Anthropology*. New York: Macmillan.
A comprehensive textbook that introduces readers to emic and etic dimensions of medical anthropology.
- Lindenbaum, Shirley, and Margaret Lock. 1993. *Knowledge, Power and Practice: The Anthropology of Medicine and Everyday Life*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
A collection of essays that examine the cultural production of ethnomedical knowledge in different societies.
- Lutz, Catherine. 1988. *Unnatural Emotions: Everyday Sentiments on a Micronesian Atoll and Their Challenge to Western Theory*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
A thought-provoking, postmodern ethnography of the "emotional" world of a small island in Micronesia, illuminating the cultural basis of emotions and highlighting inadequacies in how Western "scientific" theorists have divided the world into the categories of, among other dichotomies, "self" versus "other."
- Sankar, Andrea. 1999. *Dying at Home: A Family Guide for Caregiving*. Baltimore: Johns

Hopkins University Press.

A cultural history of death and caregiving at home, combined with an anthropologically informed guide for primary caregivers on how to look after patients in the home.

Scheper-Hughes, Nancy. 1992. *Death without Weeping: The Violence of Everyday Life in Brazil*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

A widely read postmodern ethnography in which Scheper-Hughes examines the cultural construction of knowledge about health and illness in a poor Brazilian community.

Seidman, Stephen, ed. 1994. *The Postmodern Turn: New Perspectives on Social Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511570940>

Varied interpretations of postmodern social science a decade after the postmodern perspective emerged.

Part Four: The Early Twenty-First Century

Globalization

Appadurai, Arjun. 1996. *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

An ethnographically based deconstruction of the concept of modernity.

Ashford, Barrie. 2013. *Theories of Civilization*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

Ashford deconstructs the diverse connotations of the word *globalization* and in so doing addresses pressing global issues of the day.

Coleman, Simon. 2000. *The Globalization of Charismatic Christianity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511488221>

A contribution to the globalization-focused literature, in which Coleman looks at the cultural, political, and economic dimensions of a transnational religious movement.

Escobar, Arturo. 1995. *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

An examination of the role of Western development policy—in Escobar’s view, the heir to colonial regimes—in creating, naturalizing, and economically subjugating the “Third World.”

Featherstone, Mike, ed. 1990. *Global Culture: Nationalism, Globalization, and Modernity*. London: Newbury Sage.

Various essays on the relations among culture, nation, the world system, and globalization.

Inda, Jonathan Xavier, and Renato Rosaldo, eds. 2007. *The Anthropology of Globalization: A Reader*. 2nd ed. London: Blackwell.

An introduction to anthropological thinking about globalization, with ethnographic specificity and attention to global diasporas.

Lewellen, Ted. 2002. *The Anthropology of Globalization: Cultural Anthropology Enters the 21st Century*. Westport, CT: Greenwood.

A survey of anthropological interests in globalization, with special emphasis on migration, diasporas, and refugees.

McLuhan, Marshall, and Bruce R. Powers. 1989. *The Global Village: Transformations in World Life and Media in the 21st Century*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Posthumous essays on the effects of media and technology in a globalizing world.

Robertson, Roland. 1992. *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture*. London: Sage.

A wide-ranging introduction to the political, economic, and cultural debates that characterize the study of globalization.

Public Anthropology.

Beck, Sam, and Carl A. Maida, eds. 2013. *Toward Engaged Anthropology*. New York: Berghahn Books.

Various anthropologists chart a new course toward participatory anthropology in aid of democratization and social justice.

Besteman, Catherine, and Hugh Gusterson, eds. 2005. *Why America's Top Pundits Are Wrong: Anthropologists Talk Back*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1525/nad.2005.8.1.19>

A collection of essays in which leading scholars join the conversation on important and highly charged public issues such as poverty, racism, violence against women, and American foreign policy.

Borofsky, Rob. 2005. *Yanomami: The Fierce Controversy*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

A pioneer public anthropologist offers his views on the controversy surrounding anthropologists' treatment of the Yanomami of Venezuela.

———. 2011. *Why a Public Anthropology?* Honolulu: Center for a Public Anthropology.

An argument that the anthropological industry of knowledge production has largely failed to live up to its promise to “change the world,” challenging anthropologists to find better and more compelling ways to create and sustain engagement with the mainstream public, and to create a more transparent and publically accountable discipline.

- Darnell, Regna, and Frederic W. Gleach, eds. 2015. *Corridor Talk to Culture History: Public Anthropology and Its Consequences*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
Nine anthropologists recount how they have brought their methods and theories to the attention of multiple publics.
- Edwards, David B. 2010. "Counterinsurgency as a Cultural System." *Small Wars Journal*, 27 (December). <http://smallwarsjournal.com>
Edwards provides a comprehensive analysis and evaluation of the Human Terrain System program as of 2010, based on in-depth interviews and first-hand observation of training at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.
- Feinberg, Ben. 2006. "The Promise and Peril of Public Anthropology." *Human Rights & Human Welfare* 6: 165–77.
A thoughtful review essay that examines key themes and perspectives in several recent texts in public anthropology.
- Forman, Shepard, ed. 1995. *Diagnosing America: Anthropology and Public Engagement*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
A collection of essays advocating anthropological engagement in the formulation of American public policy, challenging assumptions regarding the morally neutral character of anthropology.
- González, Alberto J., ed. 2004. *Anthropologists in the Public Sphere: Speaking Out on War, Peace, and American Power*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
Several dozen examples of recent anthropological editorializing in non-academic publications, especially concerning the exercise of American military power.
- Lucas, George R. 2009. *Anthropologists in Arms: The Ethics of Military Anthropology*. New York: AltaMira Press.
A book-length treatment of the ethical and epistemological issues surrounding anthropological engagement with the military and intelligence agencies, with special attention paid to the Human Terrain System (HTS) program and to the murky ethical problems that accompany this and other initiatives, past and present, in which the military and civilian academics worked together in theatres of war.
- Purcell, Trevor W. 2000. "Public Anthropology: An Idea Searching for a Reality." *Transforming Anthropology* 9.2: 30–33. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1525/tran.2000.9.2.30>
A short editorial summarizing some of the main ambitions of public anthropology.
- Rhodes, Lorna A. 2004. *Total Confinement: Madness and Reason in the Maximum Security Prison*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
A contribution to the University of California Press "Public Anthropology" series in which Rhodes explores the complex world and fragile politics of the super-maximum security prison.

Smith, Gavin. 1999. *Confronting the Present: Towards a Politically Engaged Anthropology*. New York: Berg.

An invitation to dialogue among anthropologists and other social scientists about the role of political engagement in a globalizing, post-modern world.

World Traditions in Anthropology

Bošković, Aleksandar, ed. 2010. *Other People's Anthropologies: Ethnographic Practice at the Margins*. New York: Berghahn Books.

An edited volume of essays by well-known anthropologists that documents the status, history, and character of ethnographic research outside the Anglo-American and French traditions.

Darnell, Regna, and Frederic W. Gleach, eds. 2014. *Anthropologists and Their Traditions across National Borders*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Twelve anthropologists recount historically how prominent Western anthropologists have delved into the anthropologies of peripheral national traditions.

De Martino, Ernesto. 2005 [1961]. *The Land of Remorse: A Study of Southern Italian Tarantism*. Trans. Dorothy Louise Zinn. London: Free Association Books.

An ethnographic exploration of “tarantula” spirit possession in a southern region of Italy, a landmark work of Italian anthropology, translated and published in English over 40 years after the appearance of its original Italian edition.

Fahim, Hussein, and Katherin Helmer. 1980. “Indigenous Anthropology in Non-Western Countries: A Further Elaboration.” *Current Anthropology* 21.5: 644–63.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1086/202542>

An account of perspectives, positions, and themes presented at a 1978 conference held in Austria on the topic of indigenous and non-Western anthropology; an insightful narrative for providing a window onto “decolonizing” voices at an embryonic phase of the postmodern critique in anthropology.

Favret-Saada, Jeanne. 1980. *Deadly Words: Witchcraft in the Bocage*. Trans. Maison des Sciences de l’Homme. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

A landmark study of witchcraft beliefs and practices in western France. Favret-Saada’s theoretical orientation emphasizes the social production of knowledge and the power of words to make social reality; a good, if rare, example of the rapid translation of a non-English monograph into English.

Gellner, Ernest, ed. 1980. *Soviet and Western Anthropology*. New York: Columbia University Press.

A collection of essays exploring convergence and divergence between Western anthropologies and anthropology as constructed through the prism of Marxist theory

(that is, dialectical materialism); though dated, valuable for the attention it pays to one of the twentieth century's most significant non-Western anthropologies.

Ribeiro, Gustavo Lins, and Arturo Escobar, eds. 2006. *World Anthropologies: Disciplinary Transformations in Systems of Power*. Oxford: Berg.

An edited volume in which contributors look at the processes involved in drawing "world anthropologies" into a global mainstream of anthropological practice, and at the tensions that inhere between non-Western approaches and those of the western hegemonic anthropologies.

Schmidt, Peter R., and Thomas C. Patterson, eds. 1995. *Making Alternate Histories: The Practice of Archaeology and History in Non-Western Settings*. Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research Press.

An edited volume of essays by non-Western scholars that advances a decolonizing critique of Western theoretical and research hegemony in the domains of archaeological and historical knowledge.

Anthropologies of the Digital Age

Boellstorff, Tom, et al. 2012. *Ethnography and Virtual Worlds: A Handbook of Methods*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

A comprehensive manual for conducting ethnographic research in online and digital worlds, covering various facets of participant observation, data collection, and interviewing.

Coleman, E. Gabriella. 2010. "Ethnographic Approaches to Digital Media." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 39.4: 487–505.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1146/annurev.anthro.012809.104945>

A comprehensive review of anthropological approaches to the study of digital technologies through 2010.

English-Lueck, J.A. 2002. *Cultures@Silicon Valley*. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press.

Among the first ethnographic studies to investigate the many ways in which high technology is built into and affects the everyday lifeworlds of workers and labourers in one of the tech industry centres of the world.

Ginsburg, Faye. 2008. "Rethinking the Digital Age." In *The Media and Social Theory*, ed. David Hesmondhalgh and Jason Toynbee, 127–144. London: Routledge.

In this chapter of an edited volume, Ginsburg discusses the ways in which discourses of the digital feed and update older narratives concerning the need for modernization of the non-modern world.

Horst, Heather A., and Daniel Miller. 2006. *The Cell Phone: An Anthropology of Communication*. London: Berg
A ground-breaking study of how cellphone technologies were adopted by Jamaicans and the various uses to which this new technology were put, with the authors investigating the economies of cellphone use and the effects of this technology on traditional social networks.

Horst, Heather A., and Daniel Miller, eds. 2012. *Digital Anthropology*. London: Berg.
An edited volume of essays by anthropologists, all of whom work on issues surrounding digital culture and the social use of new technologies, with readings including, among others, examinations of social networking, file sharing, and the cultural significance of game design.

Lafontaine, Celine. 2007. "The Cybernetic Matrix of French Theory." *Theory, Culture, & Society* 24.5: 27–46.
This article discusses the early efforts by Claude Lévi-Strauss and other ethnologists to understand the implications of cybernetic research for anthropological, philosophical, and psychoanalytic theory.

Miller, Daniel. 2011. *Tales from Facebook*. Cambridge: Polity.
A study by a well-known anthropologist of material cultures investigating the profound cultural impact of the social networking platform Facebook across a range of societies, age-sets, and domains of everyday life (including religion and marriage).

Nardi, Bonnie A. 2010. *My Life as a Night Elf Priest: An Anthropological Account of World of Warcraft*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
One of the few anthropological monographs to date to comprehensively investigate the social dynamics and practices connected to an online cultural environment—World of Warcraft—comprising an ethnography probing the ways in which WoW players invent and style new selves within a new form of imagined community.

Sanjek, Roger, and Susan W. Tratner, eds. 2015. *e-Fieldnotes: The Making of Anthropology in the Digital World*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
An edited collection of anthropological essays that speak to the ways in which new technologies have affected the practices of ethnographic fieldwork; intended as a general update to Roger Sanjek's 1990 volume *Fieldnotes: The Makings of Anthropology*.

Underberg, Natalie M., and Elayne Zorn. 2013. *Digital Anthropology: Anthropology, Narrative, and New Media*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
A volume exploring new ways to think about cultural meaning and representation in multi-media, digitized environments (especially the United States and Peru), in particular looking at modes and tools for online representation of such social institutions as cultural heritage and education.

Whitehead, Neil L., and Michael Wesch, eds. 2012. *Human No More: Digital Subjectivities, Unhuman Subjects, and the End of Anthropology*. Boulder: University Press of Colorado.

A book featuring a variety of anthropological and postmodern essays on the production of subjectivity within online environments, the engagement between online and “real world” cultural spaces, and the idea of the human, with foci of contributor engagement including online communities and virtual worlds in Brazil, Amazonia, India, on television, and across social networking sites.

Conclusion

Darnell, Regna, and Frederic W. Gleach. 2002. “Introduction.” *American Anthropologist* 104.2: 417–22. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1525/aa.2002.104.2.417>

An introductory essay to a centennial-year edition of *American Anthropologist*, in which various contributors consider their perspective on the history of anthropological scholarship.

Davis, Wade. 2002. “For a Global Declaration of Interdependence.” *The Globe and Mail*, 6 July.

A sobering post-9/11 essay concerning the contribution of gross inequities in power and wealth to the rise of Islamic extremism and jihad.

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Lewis asserts that in its eagerness for deconstruction, postmodern anthropological theory has misrepresented and effectively demonized disciplinary ancestors, in the process reducing their use in current undergraduate and graduate curricula.

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Reflections on the Disciplining of Anthropology. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
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