

Preface

Modern anthropology has become extraordinarily diverse, with a wide variety of schools of thought and theoretical models within the discipline. Not surprisingly, this breadth in the field has led to a range of approaches to thinking about and teaching those courses traditionally called four-field introductions to anthropology. In short, we anthropologists each have sometimes very different answers to the question, *What is anthropology?*

The ideas about the nature of anthropology that have guided this book's organization, discussions, and selection of topics center on the field's identity as scientific, humanistic, and holistic:

- **Anthropology can be, should be, and is scientific.** That is, it operates by inductively generating testable hypotheses, which are then deductively tested in an attempt to derive working theories about the areas of human biology and behavior that are our focuses. This is not to say that applying science to cultural variation or the abstract aspects of cultural systems is easy or particularly straightforward, or that science has even come close to satisfactorily answering all the major questions anthropologists ask about our species. Far from it. I simply believe that—if it is to be truly scholarly—the *process* of anthropologically investigating humankind is a scientific one.
- **Anthropology can be, should be, and is humanistic.** A scientific orientation and focus does not preclude nonscientific investigations and discussions of human behavior, or humanistic applications of anthropology. We are, after all, dealing with human beings who have motivations for their behaviors that fail to respond to fixed laws as do chemicals or subatomic particles. Moreover, because we deal with people, we cannot help but develop a concern for the welfare of our fellow humans. Indeed, this is what leads many to choose anthropology as a career in the first place. It becomes, then, only natural—if not morally incumbent on us—to apply what we have learned about humans and human behavior to give voice to

those without one and to lend our knowledge to the agencies and governments that administer, guide, and, sometimes, compel and manipulate social change.

- **Anthropology can be, should be, and is holistic—*because its subject is holistic*.** Thus, affiliation with one of the traditional subfields of anthropology should be no more than a starting point to the scholarly investigation of the nature of our species. In short, despite the enormous breadth of anthropological subject matter and approaches to studying those subjects, there *really is* a field called anthropology that has a distinctive viewpoint and methodology that make it uniquely valuable.

FEATURES

The assumptions that guided my writing have been concretely applied though the following features:

- To convey the holism of the discipline, the traditional subfields are not used to divide the text into major parts, nor are they titles of chapters. The standard subfields are described and defined in the first chapter, but subsequently, the methods and contributions of each are interwoven throughout the book. In other words, the text is organized around the unique subject matter of anthropology—the human species in its holistic entirety—rather than being organized around the current subfield structure of anthropology itself.
- To convey the multidimensional holism of the field at the introductory level requires choosing a theme that can act as a common thread tying all the parts together. Just saying that anthropology is holistic and giving a few specific examples is not enough. There are, of course, any number of themes that would be equally useful as such a pedagogical device. The one I have chosen is that of adaptation, broadly defined. I am not using the term in just its biological, ecological sense, although, of course, this definition does apply to human biological evolution and to the direct responses of cultures to their environments. But even abstract aspects of culture are adaptive responses to *something*. In other words, to paraphrase the title of an old anthology, my theme is that “humans make sense.” Even if we have a hard time making sense of some of our behaviors, my central integrative assumption is that behaviors have *some* explanation within their cultural contexts.
- I’ve assumed that student readers have little or no familiarity with anthropology. I am introducing them to the field from the ground up, starting from scratch, and having in mind courses whose goal is to truly *introduce* rather than supply an encyclopedic survey.

For the introductory student, none of the detail about models, paradigms, or current theoretical debates makes a bit of sense unless and until that student has a basic knowledge of the general approach, subject matter, methodology, history, and facts of our field. Then—for students going on—all the nuances of opinion, and the current not-so-subtle differences, can be examined, understood, and appreciated. Discussions, for example, about whether variation in kinship systems is best explained through materialism, structuralism, psychology, sociobiology, Marxism, post-modernism, or any other model are meaningless unless one knows what kinship is all about in the first place. Although I do briefly discuss the area of anthropological theory and note several current debates, a text that focuses on that subject or that is written from just one perspective would fail to do justice to the field. And it would certainly fail to convey to the introductory student the basic identity of anthropology, the basic facts that anthropology has discerned about the human species, and the richness of our subject matter, our scholarly worldview, and our contributions to knowledge and human welfare.

- To get students to feel that I am talking to them personally, I have mixed an appropriate level of informality with the more formal style that must be used to convey the ideas of anthropology and the seriousness with which we approach our subject. I want the students to feel that I am taking a journey through anthropology with them, not that I have just given them a map and guidebook and left them on their own.
- Because a common misconception of our field is that we only study old dried-up fossils and exotic living peoples with their bizarre behaviors, I have tried to emphasize that anthropology studies the world's peoples in all their guises—ordinary and extraordinary, next door and in remote places. I have used as many examples and analogies as possible from North American cultures, groups, and situations. Students should know that anthropology doesn't stop the moment they walk out the classroom door—that they too can do anthropology and that they too are anthropological subjects.
- No one really understands anthropology unless they can and do apply it to thinking about their own lives. To further encourage this, the text includes a “Contemporary Issues” box at the end of each chapter that specifically applies the topic of the chapter to some question about the contemporary world, with a focus, where possible, on America and American culture. Questions range from “What Responsibilities Does the Anthropologist Have When Studying Other Cultures?” to “How Can We Account for Today's Interest in Witchcraft?”

- Stories have worked well for most of human history as a vehicle for transmitting facts and ideas. They are more memorable than lists. I have written this text keeping in mind the narrative approach. There are a few literal stories, such as the one about my fieldwork that begins the book. But narrative in a more general sense refers to a causal sequence of events, and I have tried to show how the various topics within anthropology connect with one another in this manner. The student readers should be able to navigate their way through the book and know where they are within the broad and diverse field of anthropology. I have provided signposts in the form of part, chapter, and subheading titles that logically and descriptively divide the subject as I have ordered it. The number of cultures used as examples is limited so that the same groups may be referred to throughout the book in different contexts.
- A true introduction should be short and to the point. Achieving brevity while trying to introduce such a broad field is a challenge. I have tried to include every major topic within mainstream anthropology while managing the amount of detail presented. I think it is more efficient, at this level, to convey a sense of a topic through one clear, interesting, memorable example rather than four or five. One's own favorite example can always be discussed or more detail added in class.
- Finally, the text is as accessible, attractive, straightforward, and uncluttered as possible. Important terms are boldfaced where they first appear and defined briefly in a running glossary in the margin. A more comprehensive glossary is at the end of the book. Also included is a standard bibliography. The text itself is not interrupted with specific references and citations. These are listed in a section at the end of each chapter called "Notes, References, and Readings," along with other references to the topics covered and to some specific studies or facts for those interested in pursuing a subject further. A chapter summary precedes this section. Photographs and line art are in color where possible, and captions add information rather than simply label the illustrations.

NEW TO THIS EDITION

The book has been updated where needed, and the discussion of many topics has been clarified. Highlights include the following:

- To help guide students through the topics, additional subheadings have been added to some chapters, for instance, Chapter 3 on evolutionary theory.
- A Chapter Contents feature has been added to the beginning of each chapter.

- Chapter 5 has been updated to include new fossil finds such as *Orrorin tugenensis* and *Kenyanthropus platyops*.
- Chapter 7 includes new data in support of the presence of cultural behavior among chimpanzees.
- The discussion of subsistence patterns in Chapter 8 has been re-arranged to better show the variable features among them.
- In Chapter 9 the discussion of politics has been expanded and the diagrams and definitions of political systems improved.
- The discussion of law in Chapter 12 has been expanded.
- A table has been added to Chapter 13 to help clarify the biblical dietary laws.
- New data from recent genetic studies have been added to Chapter 14, and the “Contemporary Issues” box on race and athleticism has been updated.
- Chapter 16 has new data on the AIDS epidemic and includes a new “Contemporary Issues” box on careers in anthropology.

ANCILLARIES

The Instructor’s Manual includes a test bank of about 500 multiple-choice and short-answer/essay questions, as well as chapter outlines and overviews, suggested activities, lists of key words, and sample syllabi.

A Computerized Test Bank is available free of charge to qualifying adopters.

There is an Online Learning Center (www.mhhe.com/park2) that includes learning objectives, chapter summaries, and interactive activities.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I want to thank all the hard-working, creative people of the editorial, production, and sales staffs at McGraw-Hill and Mayfield for turning my ideas, words, and doodles into a real book and for providing it with the best opportunity possible to make a contribution to education in anthropology.

Special thanks to the sponsoring editor for the first edition and original sponsoring editor for this one, Jan Beatty, who encouraged me to try something different and whose influence will always be a part of this and my other books. Thanks also, as always, to my friend, colleague, and oftentimes coauthor Ken Feder for his help with references, photos, archaeological data, and computer advice. Laura Donnelly provided advice for and posed for the sign language photos. For those times when I ventured into the physical sciences, Bob Weinberger checked my facts

but remains innocent of any final transgressions. Over more than a quarter century, my students at Central Connecticut State have been my “guinea pigs” for teaching ideas and my most candid, most vocal, and most helpful critics.

The following colleagues reviewed the manuscript: Paul Axelrod, Ripon College; Jeff Behm, University of Wisconsin–Oshkosh; James R. Bindon, University of Alabama; Miriam Chaiken, Indiana University of Pennsylvania; Marie Danforth, University of Southern Mississippi; James Green, University of Washington; Mark Mooney, University of Pittsburgh; Phillip Neusius, Indiana University of Pennsylvania; Michael Olien, University of Georgia; Janet Rafferty, Mississippi State University; Robert Tykot, University of Southern Florida. Their suggestions and advice were invaluable. Any errors, of course, remain my responsibility.

As this book was about to go to press, we learned of the death, at age 60, of evolutionary biologist, paleontologist, and science writer Stephen Jay Gould. If you look at the bibliography, you’ll see he has more entries than anyone else. This is with good reason. I think no one in the last thirty years has done as much as Gould to make scientific ideas—even complex ones—accessible to the public and to convey the excitement and importance of science and scientific thinking. To his students, he was an inspired teacher. To us, his colleagues, he was a source of seemingly endless important, thought-provoking, sometimes controversial ideas, a role model for how a scientist does science. He taught us that science writing need not be boring, dry, or pedantic. His elegant and precise but very readable and clear prose was science writing at its best. It was what inspired me to try my hand at writing about my field, and I’m sure he influenced many others in many ways. He will be greatly missed, and it is no hollow cliché to say that he has left an indelible mark on all the sciences. I urge you to read just one of his works cited in this book. I’m sure you’ll want to read more.

In memory of her companionship many years ago
as I conceived, researched, and wrote
my first book, this one is for:

Joyce
(1982–1996)

And the patches make the goodbye harder still.

—CAT STEVENS