SERENA NANDA • RICHARD L. WARMS

Culture Counts

A Concise Introduction to Cultural Anthropology

Fifth Edition

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BRIEF CONTENTS

DETAILED CONTENTS

PREFACE

You hold in your hand or are reading on your screen the latest collaborative work of Serena Nanda and Rich Warms. We have been writing introductory anthropology books together now for more than a quarter century. The first edition of Serena's *Cultural Anthropology* hit the market in the late 1970s, more than 40 years ago. At that time, Serena was the only female author writing textbooks for introductory anthropology. Rich joined Serena in 1995 for the sixth edition of *Cultural Anthropology*, and we have worked together ever since.

It's hard to overstate the changes in the world and in anthropology since the early editions of our books. Many of these have been very encouraging: from the end of the Cold War to the extraordinary increases in diversity in anthropology and in many aspects of our society. Others have been deeply disturbing, from the decline of the middle class to the extraordinary polarization of political and social life in the United States and elsewhere.

When we finished writing the fourth edition of *Culture Counts* in late 2016, it was clear that truly profound changes were underway. Britain had recently voted to leave the European Union, and the chances of a Trump presidency seemed higher than expected. However, we could not have dreamed of the changes, unprecedented in our lifetimes, that would occur in the next few years. These include the rise of populist nationalism, the emergence and strength of white supremacist movements, the politics of division and outrage, and then, in late 2019 and 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic, levels of economic recession and displacement not seen since the 1930s, widespread protests over police brutality, attempts to overturn the result of the 2020 presidential election, and an attack on the U.S. Capitol. This new edition attempts to reflect on these changes and to use anthropology to contextualize them.

OUR APPROACH TO ANTHROPOLOGY AND PEDAGOGICAL STYLE

We have always deeply believed in the relevance of anthropology. We have always seen anthropology as both a profoundly philosophical and extremely practical endeavor. More than any other discipline, anthropology, by examining the full range of human culture, both past and present, provides us with different ways of thinking about what it means to be human. Thinking about culture gives us new ways to solve problems and to apply anthropology every day. And, we have to say that in our lives, the perspectives and skills of anthropology have never been more relevant. Anthropology may not have all the answers, but in a world increasingly characterized by xenophobia, anger, fear of difference, and hostility to those who do not share our views, the information and understandings that anthropology brings may truly help us avert catastrophe.

We continue to believe deeply in the value of ethnography and the way it provides a window into other lives. We continue to return to classic writing in anthropology, some of it now more

than a century old. We find deep value in the work and ideas of early twentieth century anthropologists such as Franz Boas, Margaret Mead, E. E. Evans-Pritchard, Bronislaw Malinowski, and others. Many of their ethnographic examples and theoretical perspectives are truly enduring. An anthropology that focuses only on current culture and current issues to the exclusion of historic ethnography is too limited to be useful in helping us understand humanity.

However, we also deeply value the ethnographic writing and analysis of the current day and past quarter century. Recent anthropology's focus on issues of power, gender, race, and history; its examination of the ways in which authority is constituted and maintained; and its analysis of structure and agency are critical to current-day understandings. We have been deeply inspired by authors such as Sherry Ortner, Veena Das, Cheryl Mattingly, Sarah Horton, Joel Robbins, Arthur Kleinman, Tom Boellstorff, Kimberlé Crenshaw, T. M. Luhrmann, and many, many others.

The goal of this text and, indeed, of all our books is to strive to create the best of both worlds: to engage students in both the anthropological tradition and the best of contemporary anthropological analysis. We want our students and our readers to understand the dynamics of foraging society or the ways in which reciprocity works in the kula trade. We also want them to be attuned to the dynamics of identity and inequality and to the relationships between economy, culture, race, class, ethnicity, and gender. Knowledge of the anthropological tradition informs our understanding of contemporary societies, and vice versa.

CHANGES IN THE FIFTH EDITION

The extraordinary developments of the last five years have led us to rethink the organization of the book and many of the examples and analyses that we use. There are many hundred small changes and at least 300 new references. However, readers will also notice several large changes. The biggest of these is the introduction of a new chapter on race and ethnicity. This chapter adds a great deal of new material and analysis to the material found in the stratification chapter in earlier editions.

You will notice major rewriting in three additional chapters. In Chapter 5, "Making a Living," there are new and updated extended examples from the Hadza foragers and Maasai pastoralists in East Africa and the fruit-picking industry in California. "Gender," now Chapter 11, has undergone deep revision. The new chapter is organized more clearly and includes much more focus on more recent theorizing about gender, identity, and intersectionality. Finally, the last chapter has been rewritten to incorporate much more information on current-day issues.

One of the critical ways in which we have responded to changes in world culture and in anthropology is through the features in each chapter. As in previous editions, each chapter has an opening vignette, a "Using Anthropology" feature, and ends with a "Bringing It Back Home" section. Seventeen of these sections are new to this edition, and those that are not new have been rewritten and updated. New opening vignettes include "Rebellion and Revolutions" in Chapter 7; "Race, Health, and the Environment in the United States" in Chapter 9; and "The World after Colonialism" in Chapter 15.

Our "Using Anthropology" feature had previously appeared as a heading in each chapter. In this edition, to reflect and focus on the importance of the application of anthropology, we have made it a boxed feature. New "Using Anthropology" features include "Gestures, Emoticons, and Emojis" in Chapter 4; "Helping Refugees" in Chapter 7; "Intimate Anthropology" in Chapter 10; "Working with Female Heroin Addicts" in Chapter 11; and "Development Anthropology" in Chapter 15.

As in previous editions, each chapter ends with a "Bringing It Back Home" section that includes several questions for discussion. New "Bringing It Back Home" sections focus on these topics: the anthropology of pandemics and emergencies in Chapter 3; language and its role in identity and assimilation in Chapter 4; paying for college in Chapter 6; the rise of populism in Chapter 7; the gig economy in Chapter 8; inequality, race, and ethnicity examined through COVID-19 responses in Chapter 9; global women's rights and its relation to national prosperity in Chapter 11; religion and vaccines in Chapter 12; history and who writes it and owns it in Chapter 14; and anthropology's role in the future in Chapter 15.

Issues around medical care and public health play in increasingly important role in anthropology and are an area of student interest. Although we do not have a chapter on medical anthropology, we incorporate it in many places throughout the book. You'll find it particularly in our discussion of Fadiman's *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down* in Chapter 2 and in these sections: "The Anthropology of Pandemics and Other Disasters" in Chapter 3; "Anthropologists and Nutrition" in Chapter 5; "Race, Health, and the Environment in the United States," as well as "Inequality, Race, Ethnicity, and COVID-19" in Chapter 9; "Caring for the Elderly" in Chapter 10; "Working with Female Heroin Addicts" in Chapter 11; and "Religion and Vaccine Refusal" in Chapter 12. We also discuss the role of disease in colonization (Chapter 14) and the politics and economics of governmental attempts to limit population growth, especially China's one-child policy (Chapter 15).

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Producing a book like this involves many people, and we'd like to take a moment to thank some of them individually. Of course, our families come first. We couldn't do any of this without their continued help and forbearance. After them comes our editorial team at Sage, including particularly our editors Josh Perigo and Alissa Nance and our copy editor, Karen Taylor. And, of course, our colleagues at Texas State University and elsewhere, including particularly Drs. Emily Brunson, Monica Schoch-Spana, and Michelle Hamilton. Feedback from our students has been critical, and we'd like to thank the many students in Intro to Anthro classes at Texas State for their contributions. We are also grateful for the feedback we have received from our reviewers including:

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Serena and Rich are deeply grateful for our long careers in anthropology. Between us, we've studied, taught, and written about gender, law, Indian culture, West African culture, economics, inequality, religion, history, ecology, anthropological theory, museums, tourism, peace and violence, and many other topics. Both of us fell in love with anthropology as young undergraduates and have never fallen out of love. Serena is retired now, but Rich still teaches at Texas State University, and looks forward, every year, to bringing ANTH 1312, Introduction to Cultural Anthropology, to a new group of students. We write this book with love and passion for our discipline, with respect and deep gratitude for all the professors and students who have used past editions of our books, and with the wish that those who will use this one are as inspired by the ideas, the history, and the potential of anthropology as we first were in our undergraduate days. We hope this is apparent in every chapter. As always, we are glad to hear from any of our readers. Feel free to contact us at r.warms@txstate.edu.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Serena Nanda is professor emeritus of anthropology at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, City University of New York. She has published two anthropological murder mysteries, *The Gift of a Bride: A Tale of Anthropology, Matrimony, and Murder,* a novel set in an Indian immigrant community in New York City, and *Assisted Dying: An Ethnographic Murder Mystery on Florida's Gold Coast.* Her other published works include *Neither Man nor Woman: The Hijras of India,* winner of the 1990 Ruth Benedict Prize; *American Cultural Pluralism and Law; Gender Diversity: Crosscultural Variations*; and a New York City guidebook, *40 Perfect New York Days: Walks and Rambles in and around the City*. She has always been captivated by the stories people tell and by the tapestry of human diversity. Anthropology was the perfect way for her to immerse herself in these passions and, through teaching, to spread the word about the importance of understanding both human differences and human similarities.

Richard L. Warms is professor of anthropology at Texas State University. His published works include *Anthropological Theory: An Introductory History; Theory in Social and Cultural Anthropology: An Encyclopedia*; and *Sacred Realms: Essays in Religion, Belief, and Society*. He also has written journal articles on commerce, religion, and ethnic identity in West Africa; African exploration and romanticism; and African veterans of French colonial armed forces. Warms's interest in anthropology was kindled by college courses and by his experiences as a Peace Corps Volunteer in West Africa. He has traveled extensively in Africa, Europe, Asia, and South America. He continues to teach Introduction to Cultural Anthropology as well as classes in anthropological theory, the anthropology of religion, economic anthropology, and film at both the undergraduate and graduate level. Students and faculty are invited to contact him with their comments, suggestions, and questions at r.warms@txstate.edu.

Anthropologists are interested in the total range of human activity. Here, children light clay lamps on the banks of the Ganges in Kolkata, India. What sorts of things would you like to know about them and what they're doing? What questions would you ask?

Photo by Avijit Ghosh/SOPA Images/Sipa USA/AP Images

1 INTRODUCING ANTHROPOLOGY

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Define anthropology, and explain how it differs from other academic disciplines.
2. List the major subdisciplines of anthropology and summarize their characteristics.
3. Describe some of the key reasons for studying anthropology, and explain their relevance to current problems.

THE NACIREMA

ANTHROPOLOGISTS have become so familiar with the diversity of ways different peoples behave in similar situations that they are not surprised by even the most exotic customs. However, the magical beliefs and practices of the Nacirema are so unusual that it seems desirable to describe them as an example of the extremes to which human behavior can go. The Nacirema are a North American group living in the territory between the Canadian Cree, the Yaqui and Tarahumare of Mexico, and the Carib and Arawak of the Antilles. Little is known of their origin, although tradition states that they came from the east.

Nacirema culture is characterized by a highly developed market economy, but Naciremans spend a considerable portion of the day in ritual activity. The focus of this activity is the human body, the appearance and health of which loom as dominant concerns in the ethos of the people.

The fundamental belief underlying the whole system appears to be that the human body is ugly and has a natural tendency to debility and disease. People's only hope is to avert these through the use of ritual and ceremony, and every household has one or more shrines devoted to this purpose. The rituals associated with the shrine are secret and are discussed with children only when they are being initiated into these mysteries. I was able, however, to establish sufficient rapport with the natives to examine these shrines and to have the rituals described to me.

The focal point of the shrine is a box or chest built into the wall in which are kept the many charms and magical potions no native believes he could live without. Beneath the charm box is a small fountain. Each day, every member of the family, in succession, enters the shrine room, bows his head before the charm box, mingles different sorts of holy water in the fountain, and proceeds with a brief rite of purification. The holy waters are secured from the Water Temple of the community, where the priests conduct elaborate ceremonies to make the liquid ritually pure.

The Nacirema have an almost pathological horror of and fascination with the mouth, the condition of which is believed to have a supernatural influence on all social relationships. Each day, Naciremans perform a complex set of rituals devoted to the mouth. Were it not for these rituals, they believe that their teeth would fall out, their gums bleed, their jaws shrink, their friends desert them, and their lovers reject them.

In addition to daily mouth rites, the people seek out a holy-mouthman once or twice a year. These practitioners have an impressive set of paraphernalia, consisting of a variety of augers, awls, probes, and prods. The use of these objects in the exorcism of the evils of the mouth involves almost unbelievable ritual torture of the client. The holy-mouth-man uses these tools to scrape, prod, and cut particularly sensitive areas of the mouth. Magical materials believed to arrest decay and draw friends are inserted in the mouth. The extremely sacred and traditional character of the rite is evident in the fact that the natives return to the holy-mouth-men year after year, even though their teeth continue to decay. One has but to watch the gleam in the eye of a holy-mouth-man, as he jabs an awl into an exposed nerve, to suspect that a certain amount of sadism is involved in these practices. And indeed, much of the population shows definite masochistic tendencies. For example, a portion of the daily body ritual performed only by men involves scraping and lacerating the surface of the face with a sharp instrument.

Nacirema medicine men have an imposing temple, or latipsoh, in every community of any size. The more elaborate ceremonies required to treat very sick patients can be performed only at this temple. These ceremonies involve not only the priests who perform miracles but also a permanent group of vestal maidens who move sedately about the temple chambers in distinctive costume.

The latipsoh ceremonies are so harsh that it is surprising that sick adults are not only willing but also eager to undergo the protracted ritual purification if they can afford to do so. No matter how ill the supplicant or how grave the emergency, the guardians of the temple will not admit a client if he cannot give a rich gift to the custodian. Even after one has gained admission and survived the ceremonies, the guardians continue to demand gifts, sometimes pursuing clients to their homes and businesses.

Supplicants entering the temple are first stripped of all their clothes. Psychological shock results from the fact that body secrecy is suddenly lost. A man whose own wife has never seen him in an excretory act suddenly finds himself naked and assisted by a vestal maiden while he performs his natural functions into a sacred vessel. Female clients find their naked bodies are subjected to the scrutiny, manipulation, and prodding of the medicine men. The fact that these temple ceremonies may not cure and may even kill the patients in no way decreases the people's faith in the medicine men.

Mention must also be made of certain practices of the Nacirema that have their base in native aesthetics but depend on the pervasive aversion to the natural body and its functions. There are ritual fasts to make fat people thin and ceremonial feasts to make thin people fat. Other rites are used to make women's breasts larger if they are small, and smaller if they are large.

Our review of the ritual life of the Nacirema has shown them to be a magic-ridden people. It is hard to understand how they have managed to exist so long under the burdens they have imposed upon themselves. But even exotic customs such as these take on real meaning when they are viewed with the insight that Bronislaw Malinowski, one of the most important twentieth-century anthropologists, provided when he wrote, "Looking from far and above, from our high places of safety in civilization, it is easy to see all the crudity and irrelevance of magic. But without its power and guidance early man could not have mastered his practical difficulties as he has done, nor could man have advanced to the higher stages of civilization."

INTRODUCING ANTHROPOLOGY

The essay you've just read is adapted from a classic piece of American anthropology by Horace Miner (1912–1993). Despite being more than half a century old, it has lost none of its bite. The essay is good because it plays upon two critical themes that continue to draw people to anthropology: our quest to gain knowledge and to understand people who are vastly different from ourselves and our desire to know ourselves and our own culture better.

Miner's essay draws you in as you read about the strange and bizarre customs of people who at first appear utterly different from yourself. You're not only titillated by the details of exotic practices but also comforted by the scientific writing style that seems to assure you that somehow this all makes sense. At some point in your reading, you probably realized that Miner (1956) is describing American customs as they might have been seen fifty years ago from the point of view of an unknowing but perhaps perceptive observer. Your first reaction might be to chuckle at the narrator's misunderstandings and treat the essay as an example of just how wrong an outside observer might be about a culture. But if you're a reflective person, you might have also wondered if the narrator hadn't turned up some fairly penetrating insights about the nature of our society. Clearly, the narrator has misunderstood some of the ways Americans think about bathrooms, dentists, and hospitals. But is the narrator so far off in describing the American attitude toward disease, decay, and death? Finally, if you caught the joke early enough, you might have pondered the meaning of the quotation that ends the essay: Have we really "advanced to the higher stages of civilization?" What does that mean anyway?

Miner's essay deals with some of the critical questions and desires at the heart of anthropology: How do we understand other people and actions that seem different, odd, or strange? Why do people do what they do? And, perhaps more profoundly, how do we go about describing our own and other people's cultural worlds? How do we know if these descriptions are accurate? We will return to these issues in many places in this book. But first, a brief definition and description of anthropology: **Anthropology** is the scientific and humanistic study of human beings. It encompasses the evolutionary history of humanity, physical variation among humans, the study of past societies, and the comparative study of current-day human societies and cultures.

A **society** is a group of people who depend on one another for survival or well-being. **Culture** is the way members of a society adapt to their environment and give meaning to their lives. It includes ideas, beliefs, and values as well as behaviors.

Some critical goals of anthropology are to describe, analyze, and explain different cultures; to show how groups live in different physical, economic, and social environments; and to show how their members give meaning to their lives. Anthropology attempts to comprehend the entire human experience. Through human paleontology, it describes the evolutionary development of our species. Through archaeology, it reaches from current-day societies to those of the distant past. Through primatology, it extends beyond humans to encompass the animals most closely related to us.

Human beings almost everywhere are **ethnocentric** (Photo 1.1). That is, they consider their own behavior not only right but also natural. We often want other people to behave just like we do, and we feel troubled, insulted, or outraged when they do not. Indeed, part of our reaction to the

PHOTO 1.1 Ethnocentrism, the notion that one's own culture is superior to any other, is the sentiment expressed in this 1930s era advertisement. A famous 1937 photo contrasted the well off smiling white family in the photo with a breadline of mostly Black people below it.

Sueddeutsche Zeitung Photo/Alamy Stock Photo

Nacirema essay stems from the fact that the Naciremans seem to do things that, to us, seem neither right nor natural. However, as the essay suggests, the range of human behavior is truly enormous.

For example, should you give your infant bottled formula, or should you breastfeed not only your own child but, like the Efe of Democratic Republic of Congo, those of your friends and neighbors as well (Peacock 1991, 352)? Is it right that emotional love should precede sexual relations? Or should sexual relations precede love, as is normal for the Mangaian of the Pacific (Marshall 1971)? What should we have for lunch: hamburgers and fries or termites, grasshoppers, and hot maguey worms, all of which are commonly eaten in certain regions of Mexico (Bates 1967, 58–59)? Should we bring our baby into a shop or restaurant with us or leave it to snooze in a stroller outside, as is common in Denmark (Lodish 2014; Photo 1.2)?

For anthropologists, these examples suggest that what is right or natural for human beings is not easily determined and that attempts to understand human nature and theories of human behavior cannot be based simply on our own cultural assumptions. To reflect humanity accurately, they also must be based on studies of human groups whose goals, values, views of reality, and environmental adaptations are very different from our own. We can achieve an accurate understanding of humanity only by realizing that other groups of people who behave differently from us and have different understandings also consider the things they do and the ways they understand the world to be normal and natural.

One job of anthropology is to understand what actions and ideas mean within their contexts and to place these within the broader framework of human society, environment, and history. Anthropologists refer to the practice of attempting to understand cultures within their contexts as **cultural relativism**. It is important to understand that practicing cultural relativism does not mean that anthropologists believe all cultural traditions to be good or to be of equal worth or that all should be honored or preserved. People around the world, and indeed in our own society, do terrible things. Slavery, human sacrifice, and torture are all cultural practices. Anthropologists do not defend such customs on the basis of cultural relativism. However, anthropologists do believe that we need to understand even those practices that horrify us. Anthropologists study how they developed, how they work in society, and how they are

PHOTO 1.2 In Denmark, it is common for shopping or dining parents to leave their babies outside.

AP Photo/Bjoern Kaehler

experienced by the people who live them. And, sometimes, how they might be changed. Both ethnocentrism and cultural relativism are examined in greater detail in Chapter 3.

Anthropologists bring a holistic approach to understanding and explaining. To say anthropology is **holistic** means that it combines the study of human biology, history, and the learned and shared patterns of human behavior and thought we call culture to analyze human groups. Holism separates anthropology from other academic disciplines, which generally focus on one factor—biology, psychology, physiology, or society—as the explanation for human behavior.

Because anthropologists use this holistic approach, they are interested in the total range of human activity. Most anthropologists specialize in a single field and a single problem, but together, they study the small dramas of daily living as well as spectacular social events. They study how mothers hold their babies or sons address their fathers. They want to know not only how a group gets its food but also the rules for eating it. Anthropologists are interested in how people in human societies think about time and space and how they see and name colors. They are interested in health and illness and the significance of physical variation, as well as many other things. Anthropologists study these things not only in other societies but in our own as well. Anthropologists maintain that culture, social organization, history, and human biology are tightly interrelated. Although we can never know absolutely everything about any group of people, the more we know about the many different facets of a society, the clearer the picture we are able to draw and the greater the depth of our understanding.

SPECIALIZATION IN ANTHROPOLOGY

In the United States, anthropology has traditionally included four separate subdisciplines: biological (or physical) anthropology, linguistic anthropology, archaeology, and cultural anthropology. To these four traditional subfields, some may add a fifth, applied anthropology. Although professional anthropologists generally have training in all of the subdisciplines, they usually identify with one of them. In this section, we briefly describe each subfield.

Biological or Physical Anthropology

People live in a broad range of ecological and social conditions. Our ability to survive and prosper in many different circumstances is based on the enormous flexibility of cultural behavior. The capacity for culture, however, is grounded in the biological history and physical makeup of our species. Humans are biocultural beings; that is, our lives involve both biological and cultural dimensions. Therefore, to understand fully what it is to be human, we need a sense of how the biological aspects of human adaptation came about and how they both influence and are influenced by human cultural behavior.

Biological (or physical) anthropology is the study of humankind from a biological perspective. It focuses primarily on the aspects of humanity that are genetically inherited. Biological anthropology includes numerous subfields, such as the analysis of skeletons; the study of human nutrition; the statistical study of human populations; the study of patterns of disease; and the study of primates, animals that are closely related to humans.

Biological anthropology is probably best known for the study of human evolution. Paleoanthropologists use the fossil record to trace the history of human evolution. They study the remains of creatures that were related to modern-day humans and those that are ancestral to humanity.

The study of human variation is another subspecialty of biological anthropology. It is concerned with physiological differences among humans. Anthropologists who study human variation map physiological differences among modern human groups and attempt to explain the sources of this diversity.

Our unique evolutionary history resulted in the development of biological structures such as the human brain, dexterous hands with opposable thumbs, and an upright posture that frees these hands from work in locomotion. This biology is the basis of our ability to invent, learn, and use cultural adaptations. Cultural adaptation, in turn, has affected human biology. For example, in *Catching Fire* (2009), Richard Wrangham argues that an aspect of culture, the ability to control fire and use it to cook food, led to dramatic biological and social changes in human ancestors. Cooked food was more digestible than raw, and this resulted in changes in human anatomy (far shorter digestive tracts than our closest primate relations). Cooking food required changes in social organization that led to much greater cooperation between males and females than is found among nonhuman primates. Wrangham thus shows that human culture is not simply social and cultural "software" running on biological "hardware." Rather, the cultural and the biological are intimately related and ultimately inseparable. Human evolution is both a biological and a cultural process.

In addition to studying humans and their ancestors, biological anthropologists study nonhuman primates as well. These are members of the biological order that include monkeys, apes, and humans. We study monkeys and apes for the clues that their body structures, behaviors, and genetics provide about our own species. Much of the work of biological anthropologists involves studying these animals in the wild. Jane Goodall, who works with chimpanzees in Tanzania, is among the best-known anthropologists. Other well-known primatologists include Sarah Hrdy and Jill Pruetz.

Linguistic Anthropology

Language is the primary means by which people communicate with one another. Although most creatures communicate, human speech is more complex and creative than the communication systems used by other animals. Language is an essential part of what it means to be human and a basic part of all cultures. **Linguistic anthropology** is concerned with understanding language and its relation to culture.

Language is an amazing thing we take for granted. When we speak, we use our bodies—our lungs, vocal cords, mouth, tongue, and lips—to produce noise of varying tones and pitches. And, somehow, when we do this (and if we speak the same language), we can communicate with one another. Linguistic anthropologists want to understand how language is structured, how it is learned, and how this communication takes place.

Language is key to cultural interaction and transmission. Thus, studying language helps us understand culture. For example, people generally talk about the people, places, and objects that are important to them. Therefore, the vocabularies of spoken language may give us clues to important aspects of culture. Knowing the words that people use for things and how these words are related to one another may help us to glimpse the ways they understand the world.

Language involves much more than words. When we speak, we perform. If we tell a story, we don't simply recite the words. We emphasize some things. We add inflection that can turn a serious phrase comic or a comic phrase serious. We give our own special tilt to a story, even if we are just reading a book out loud. Linguistic anthropologists are interested in the ways in which people perform language—in the ways they change and modify the meanings of their words.

All languages change. Historical linguists work to discover how languages have changed and how languages are related to each other. Understanding linguistic change and the relationships between languages helps us to work out the past of the people who speak them. Knowing, for example, the relationships among various Native American languages give us insight into the histories and migrations of those who speak them.

The technological changes of the past two decades have opened a new world of communications. The widespread use of cell phones, email, texting, and social networking create entirely new ways of communicating, changing both the occasions on which people communicate and the language they use. For example, 50 years ago, people who lived at great distances from each other communicated relatively rarely. The mail was often slow, and phone calls were expensive. Now, such people may communicate many times daily, texting each other, speaking on the phone, and interacting with each other using tools such as Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat.

Online and mobile games such as Warcraft, Minecraft, Words with Friends, and many others allow real-time interaction across vast distances. Cell phones have become extremely important in poorer nations. For example, in 1998, there were no cell phones in Botswana. But by 2006, there were more than 800,000, enough for half the total population and more than six times the number of landlines. By 2008, virtually the entire population had cell phones (Aker and Mbiti 2010). And by 2019, there were 1.7 cellular subscriptions for every person in Botswana (O'Dea 2020). In 2019, across sub-Saharan Africa, there were 477 million unique mobile phone subscribers, a number expected to rise to 1 billion by 2024 (GSMA 2020, 3). Studying these changes in communication is an exciting new challenge for linguistic anthropologists.

Understanding language is a critical task for people interested in developing new technology as well. We live in a world where computers talk to us and listen to us. We will be able to build machines that use language effectively only if we understand how humans structure and use language.

Archaeology

Archaeology is the study of past cultures through analysis of their material remains (archaeologists don't dig up dinosaurs or other ancient fossils; that is the job of paleontologists). Archaeologists add a vital time dimension to our understanding of cultures.

Many archaeologists study prehistoric societies—those for which no written records have been found or no writing systems have been deciphered. However, even when an extensive written record is available, as in the case of ancient Greece or Colonial America, archaeology can help increase our understanding of the cultures and lifeways of those who came before us.

Archaeologists' goal is to reconstruct past culture from material remains or artifacts. An artifact is any object that human beings have made, used, or altered. Artifacts include pottery, tools, garbage, and whatever else a society has left behind.

In the popular media, archaeology is mainly identified with spectacular discoveries of artifacts from prehistoric and ancient cultures, such as the tomb of the Egyptian king Tutankhamun. As a result, people often think of archaeologists primarily as collectors. But contemporary archaeologists are much more interested in using their findings to understand past cultural behavior than in creating collections. Their principal task is to explain how people lived in the past based on the nature and the patterns of the artifacts those people left behind. Archaeologists work like detectives, slowly sifting through and interpreting evidence (Photo 1.3). The context in which things are found, the location of an archaeological site, and the precise position of an artifact within that site are critical to interpretation. In fact, these may be more important than the artifact itself.

There are many different specialties within archaeology. Urban archaeology is a good example. Urban archaeologists delve into the recent and distant past of current-day cities. In doing so, they uncover knowledge of the people often left out of the history books, making our understanding of the past far richer than it was. For example, Elizabeth Scott's work at Nina Plantation in Louisiana (Scott 2001) adds to our understanding of the lives of slaves and free laborers from the 1820s to the 1890s. Joseph Bagley's excavation of a Boston outhouse belonging to a Puritan woman from the late 1600s unearthed a bowling ball and frilly lace, interesting

PHOTO 1.3 Archaeologists reconstruct past cultures based on the material remains they leave behind. Here, archaeology students uncover a skeleton at a 3,000-year-old Philistine cemetery in Israel.

Dan Porges/Getty Images

because both were illegal at the time. This suggests that people's private behavior could be quite different from what was recorded in the official records (Bagley 2016).

Another important archaeology subfield is cultural resource management (CRM). Archaeologists working in CRM are concerned with the protection and management of archaeological, archival, and architectural resources. They are often employed by federal, state, and local agencies to develop and implement plans for the protection and management of such cultural resources.

Cultural Anthropology

The study of human society and culture is known as **cultural anthropology**. Anthropologists define society as a group of people persisting through time and the social relationships among these people: their statuses and roles. Traditionally, societies are thought of as occupying a specific geographic location, but modern transportation and electronic communication have made specific locales less important. Societies are increasingly global rather than local phenomena.

As Chapter 2 will show, culture is an extremely complex phenomenon. Culture is the major way in which human beings adapt to their environments and give meaning to their lives. It includes human behavior and ideas that are learned rather than genetically transmitted, as well as the material objects a group of people produces.

Cultural anthropologists attempt to understand culture both as a universal human phenomenon and as a characteristic of a group of people. They use many different research strategies to examine the dynamics of individual cultures and to search for general principles that underlie all cultures. They may explore how different societies adapt to their environments, the

means by which they produce or acquire food, the structure of their economies, how their members understand the world and their place in it, or how members of different cultures interact with and change one another. Anthropologists are often particularly interested in the effects of differences of power both among cultures and within individual cultures. Research in cultural anthropology almost always involves participant observation, long-term fieldwork based on gathering data by observing and participating in people's lives.

Ethnography and ethnology are two important aspects of cultural anthropology. **Ethnography** is the description of society or culture. An ethnographer attempts to describe an entire society or a particular set of cultural institutions or practices. Ethnographies may be either emic, or etic, or may combine the two. An **emic** ethnography attempts to capture what ideas and practices mean to members of a culture. It attempts to give readers a sense of what it feels like to be a member of the culture it describes. An **etic** ethnography describes and analyzes culture according to principles and theories drawn from Western scientific traditions such as ecology, economy, or psychology.

Ethnology is the attempt to find general principles or laws that govern cultural phenomena. Ethnologists compare and contrast practices in different cultures to find regularities.

Cultural anthropology is a complex field with many different subfields. One index of this complexity is the more than 50 different sections and interest groups of the American Anthropological Association; the vast majority of these are concerned with cultural anthropology. Some examples include political and legal anthropology, which is concerned with issues of nationalism, citizenship, the state, colonialism, and globalism; humanistic anthropology, which is focused on the personal, ethical, and political choices humans face; and visual anthropology, which is the study of visual representation and the media.

Cultural anthropologists are often particularly interested in documenting and understanding how cultures change (Photo 1.4). They examine the roles that power and coercion play in change, as well as humans' ability to invent new technologies and social forms and modify old ones. Studies of culture change are important because rapid shifts in society, economy, and technology are basic characteristics of the contemporary world. Understanding the dynamics of change is critical for individuals, governments, and corporations. One goal of cultural anthropology is to be able to contribute productively to public debate about the promotion of and reaction to change, both in our own society and elsewhere.

Applied Anthropology

Although anthropology is concerned with basic research—that is, trying to answer the big questions about the origins of our species, the nature of culture, and the meanings and functions of human social institutions—from the start, anthropologists have been interested in the application of their studies. Anthropologists such as Franz Boas contributed to debates on race and foreign policy at the turn of the twentieth century. Margaret Mead, Ruth Benedict, and others did studies aimed at helping America's efforts during World War II. However, throughout much of the twentieth century, almost all anthropologists worked in universities. In the past 50 years, however, anthropology has increasingly become a full-time profession for people outside of universities. **Applied anthropology** is the use of cultural anthropology, linguistics,

PHOTO 1.4 Anthropologists are often particularly interested in documenting culture change. Here a male dancer in a traditional costume speaks with a woman in contemporary dress at the San Fermin fiesta in northern Spain.

Tim Graham/Getty Images

archaeology, and biological anthropology to solve practical problems in business, politics, delivery of services, land management, and many other fields. There are anthropologists who analyze factory floors and decision-making structures for large corporations. There are those who try to determine the best ways to sell products or deliver services. There are anthropologists

who work for hospitals and health care organizations, improving the ability of these agencies to serve their patients. Some anthropologists work in politics, performing foreign and domestic policy analysis for governmental agencies. Some are employed in trying to find effective ways to deliver aid to people in poor nations. Other anthropologists work in museums or on public lands, uncovering our archaeological heritage and both preserving it and making it available to the public.

USING ANTHROPOLOGY: FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGY

Every chapter in this book has a section called "Using Anthropology," in which we describe some of the different ways that anthropologists use their skills in effecting action in the world. Among other topics, we explore examples of how engaged anthropologists work for the communities they study (Chapter 3), linguistic anthropologists help solve crimes (Chapter 4), and nutritional anthropologists help stop hunger (Chapter 5). Our first section is about forensic anthropologists.

Popularized in television shows such as *Bones* and documentaries such as *The Decrypters*, forensic anthropology is a well-known example of applied biological anthropology. Forensic anthropologists use their anthropological training to identify skeletal or badly decomposed human remains (see Photo 1.5). Their goal is to discover information that can assist in the detection of crime and the prosecution of those responsible.

PHOTO 1.5 Forensic anthropologists help discover information about victims of crime. Here, forensic anthropology students from Texas State University help law enforcement officials recover human remains near San Antonio, Texas.

Picture from TX ST Anthro

A case begins when a law enforcement agency or medical examiner's office calls for help in discovering the identity and cause of death of an individual whose remains have recently been found. Sometimes, the remains are nonhuman or very old. However, in many cases they are from a recent violent crime.

The next step is the recovery of the body. Anthropologists are frequently called upon to assist law enforcement personnel and supervise the procedure. Sometimes, bodies are found well preserved, but often they are burned, fragmentary, or in various stages of decomposition. Michelle Hamilton, a forensic anthropologist at Texas State University, has recovered bodies in caves, on mountaintops, in forests, down wells, under water, from burned homes, and in many other environments. In one tricky case, Hamilton was called in to excavate underneath a house. A family member who lived in this house had disappeared seven years previously. When she found the body, it was still fully fleshed and recognizable. Therefore, Hamilton concluded that it could not have been buried the entire time since the individual first disappeared. The mystery was solved when family members confessed that the individual had been killed seven years ago, but they had stored the body in a freezer and had only buried it that week.

After a body has been recovered, the anthropologist's job is to establish the individual's identity and to help interpret the events surrounding death. To do this, anthropologists analyze bones and other remains. They search for unique identifying marks. They also analyze trauma and fracture patterns that can provide information about how the person died. In some cases, facial reconstructions are made to provide a likeness of the deceased and to further aid in identification.

In every case, forensic anthropologists are required to produce a report of their findings. Law enforcement agencies use these reports to match bodies with missing persons reports and, if foul play is suspected, to prosecute the individuals believed to be responsible. Usually, the anthropologist's work ends with the delivery of the report, but on occasion, a forensic anthropologist is required to testify as an expert witness in a criminal trial.

In addition to working on individual criminal cases, forensic anthropologists have also played very important roles in identifying the dead in cases of political mass murder or genocide (Fondebrider and Wilson 2015). Some examples are excavations to find and determine the identity of those who "disappeared" during the "dirty war" in Argentina (1976–1983) and those who were murdered during the Bosnian genocide (1992–1995).

Everyday Anthropology

Although there are many careers in anthropology, it is our conviction that applied anthropology consists of more than just people earning their living with the skills they gained through training in anthropology. Perhaps the most important aspect of anthropology (and the primary justification for its existence) is the way an anthropological perspective demands that we open our eyes and experience the world in new ways. In a sense, learning anthropology is like a fish coming to understand the meaning of water. How can a fish understand water? Water is all a fish knows, and it knows it so well it cannot distinguish it from the nature of life and reality itself. Similarly, all humans live in cultures, and our experiences are normally bounded by our cultures. We often mistake the realities and truths of our culture for reality and truth itself and think that the ways we understand and do things are the only appropriate ways of

understanding and doing. The fish understands the meaning of water only when it is removed from the water (usually with fatal consequences). If anthropology is not exactly about removing people from their culture, it is, in a sense, the conscious attempt to allow people to see beyond its bounds. Through learning about other cultures, we become increasingly aware of the variety of different understandings present in the world and of the social dynamics that underlie culture. This promotes awareness of the meanings and dynamics of our own and other cultures and encourages us to think creatively.

Applying anthropology isn't just getting paid to use your anthropological training. All of us do applied anthropology when we bring anthropological understandings and insight to bear on problems of inequality, education, war, violence, and peace. We don't apply anthropology only when we write a report. We apply anthropology when we go to the voting booth and the grocery store, when we discuss issues with our friends, and, if we're religious, when we pray. Anthropology provides no simple answers. There is no correct anthropological way to vote, shop, or pray. However, anthropology does inform our decisions about these things. Our attempt to understand other cultures and our own lets us look on our own with new eyes.

WHY STUDY ANTHROPOLOGY?

If you're reading this book for a course at a college or university, and particularly if you are considering a major in anthropology, you've probably faced some strong questioning from friends and family members. Some may have known about anthropology and applauded your wisdom in taking this course. Others may have had no idea what anthropology is. Still others probably asked you what anthropology is good for and what you hope to do with it. You might have told them that you want to work in one of the many aspects of applied anthropology or to become a college professor, but we think there are other good answers as well.

Some Honest Talk about College Majors and Jobs

Anthropology is, in most places, part of a liberal arts curriculum, which also generally includes English, geography, history, modern languages, philosophy, political science, psychology, and sociology, as well as other departments and programs. Some liberal arts departments have teacher-training programs. If you want to teach middle school English, in most places, you will probably need a degree in English. Some liberal arts programs involve training in highly technical skills that are directly applicable to jobs. For example, geography departments may offer training in remote sensing, the acquisition and analysis of aerial photography, and multispectral and infrared imagery and radar imagery for use by government and business. However, the vast majority of liberal arts programs produce generalists. An undergraduate degree in psychology does not generally get you a job as a psychologist. Most people who study political science do not go on to be politicians, and few who study sociology go on to work as sociologists. In fact, surveys consistently find that only about 30 percent of college graduates have jobs that are closely connected with their college major (Abel and Deitz 2015). For example, in a survey of 3,000 alumni from the University of Virginia School of Arts and Sciences, 70 percent reported that

there was little such connection. And this survey included many who had majored in subjects that taught very specific technical skills (University of Virginia 2008). Even more surprising, data from the U.S. Census Bureau show that, in 2011, only about a quarter of science and engineering graduates held jobs that were related to their degrees and that required at least a bachelor's degree to perform (Landivar 2013, 2).

Despite the statistics just cited, many private and public organizations look specifically to hire anthropologists. The U.S. government is probably the largest employer of anthropologists, followed by Microsoft (Wood 2013, 51). Companies that have hired anthropologists include Intel, Citicorp, AT&T, Kodak, Disney, General Mills, and many others. Additionally, there are numerous jobs for anthropologists in the public and nonprofit sectors, including positions in international development, social services, museums, national parks, and governmental organizations concerned with national security. In a 2015 article by George Anders in the business magazine *Forbes* titled "That 'Useless' Liberal Arts Degree Has Become Tech's Hottest Ticket," the chief information officer at a major tech firm argues that technical brilliance is not enough, firms need people who understand culture and processes. A recently published study by Harvard professor David J. Deming (2017) demonstrates that jobs requiring understanding of social interaction grew rapidly between 1980 and 2012 while the number of less socially informed jobs shrank. Culture, process, and social interaction are skills at which anthropology students excel.

However, like students with other majors, most anthropology graduates go on to more general positions in government, business, and the professions. Some become executives at large corporations, some are restaurateurs, some are lawyers, some are doctors, some are social service workers, some sell insurance, some are government officials, some are diplomats, and, no doubt, some may struggle financially and have to work at entry-level or temporary positions. And you could say the same for the vast majority of students majoring in most subjects.

Asking Better Questions

To refocus our question about the use of anthropology, we might ask: What are the particular ways of thought that anthropology courses develop and that are applicable to the very broad range of occupations that anthropologists follow? How is anthropology different from other social science disciplines? Although there are certainly many ways to answer these questions, it seems to us that three are of particular importance.

First, anthropology is the university discipline that focuses on understanding other groups of people. This focus on culture is one of the most valuable contributions anthropology can make to our ability to understand our world, and to analyze and solve problems.

Although the United States has always been an ethnically and culturally diverse place, for most of the twentieth century, the reins of wealth and power were held by a dominant group: white Protestant men of northern European ancestry. Members of other groups did sometimes become rich, and there were certainly many poor white Protestants. However, wealthy white Protestants held the majority of positions of influence and power in U.S. society, including executive positions at most large corporations, high political offices at both state and national levels, and seats on the judiciary. As a result, if you happened to be born white, Protestant, and

male, you had an advantage. Of course, you might inherit great wealth. But, even if (as was far more likely) you were the son of a factory hand or a shopkeeper, you were a representative of the dominant culture. The ways of the powerful were, more or less, your ways. If members of other cultural groups wanted to speak with you, do business with you, participate in public and civic affairs with you, they had to learn to do so on your terms—not you on theirs. They not only had to learn to speak English, but they also had to learn the forms of address, body language, clothing, manners, and so on appropriate to their role in your culture. Because others had to do the work of changing their behavior, you yourself were probably almost completely unaware of this disparity and accepted it simply as the way things are. *Miami Herald* columnist Leonard Pitts has pointed out that "if affirmative action is defined as giving preferential treatment on the basis of gender or race, then no one in this country has received more than white men" (2009, 214). This is true whether or not such men wanted preference or realized they were getting it.

White, Protestant, northern European men still control most of the wealth in the United States. However, by the late twentieth century, their virtual monopoly on power had begun to break up. Members of minority groups have moved to stronger economic and political positions. Moreover, the United States increasingly exists in a world filled with powerful nations with very different histories and traditions. It is less and less a world where everyone wants to do business with the United States and is willing to do so on American terms. Instead, it is a rapidly globalizing world characterized by corporations with headquarters and workforces spread across the globe; by international institutions such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Trade Organization; and by capital and information flows that cross cultural boundaries in milliseconds. Americans who wish to understand and operate effectively in such a world must learn other cultures and other ways; failure to do so puts them at a distinct disadvantage.

By the way, some of the most important lessons anthropology has to teach concern the idea of race. Biological anthropology shows that humanity is composed of a single race. Biological differences between individual people are very small, and no agreed-upon scientific way of dividing humans into biological races has ever been found. Races are aspects of history and culture rather than of biology. These ideas are explored fully in Chapter 9 on race and caste.

At home, the United States is once again a nation of immigrants. In 2018, the United States had about 44.7 million foreign-born residents, more than 13 percent of the total population (Frey 2019; Photo 1.6). Until the late twentieth century, most immigrants were cut off from their homelands by politics and by the expense and difficulty of communication. Under these conditions, assimilation to the dominant American culture was essential. Although politics may sometimes prevent truly free communication, today's immigrants can, in most cases, communicate freely and inexpensively with family and friends in their homelands and may be able to travel back and forth regularly. Thus, complete assimilation is far less necessary or desirable.

Some people may applaud multiculturalism; others may bemoan what they feel is the passing of the "American" way of life. What no one can dispute is that the world of today is vastly different from the world of 1950. Given the increasing integration of economic systems, the declining costs of communication and transportation, and the rising economic power of China and other nations, we can be sure that people of different ethnic, racial, and cultural back-

PHOTO 1.6 The United States is a nation of immigrants. In 2018, the United States had about 44.7 million foreign-born residents, more than 13 percent of the total population. Here, newly sworn-in U.S. citizens celebrate in Lowell, Massachusetts, in January 2019.

JOSEPH PREZIOSO/AFP via Getty Images

grounds will meet more and more frequently in arenas where none has clear economic and cultural dominance. Thus, an understanding of the nature of culture and knowledge of the basic tools scholars have devised to analyze it are essential, and anthropology is the place to get them.

In addition to this first, very practical application, there is a second, more philosophical concern. Like scholars in many other disciplines, anthropologists grapple with the question of what it means to be a human being. However, they bring some unique tools to bear upon this issue. Within anthropology, we can look for the answer to this question in two seemingly mutually exclusive ways. We can look at culture as simply the sum of everything that humans have done, thought, created, and believed. In a sense, as individual humans, we are heirs to the totality of the cultural practices and experiences humans have ever had. Anthropology is the discipline that attempts to observe, collect, record, and understand the full range of human cultural experience. Through anthropology, we know the great variety of forms that cultures can take. We know the huge variation in social organization, belief systems, production, and family structure that is found in human society. This gives us insight into both the plasticity of human society and the limits to that plasticity. It shows humanity as capable of great works of art and intellect, but also of horror and violence.

Alternatively, we can answer the question by ignoring the variability of human culture and focusing on the characteristics that all cultures share. In the 1940s, George Murdock listed 77 characteristics that he believed were common to all cultures. These included such things as dream interpretation, incest taboos, inheritance rules, and religious ritual. More recent authors

(Brown 1991; Cleaveland, Jean and Maryanne 1979) have developed other lists and analyses. Brown (1991, 143) notes that human universals are very diverse, and there is likely no single explanation for them. However, thinking about such commonalities among cultures may guide us in our attempt to understand human nature.

Finally, a third interest of anthropologists is in creating new and useful ways to think about culture. One particularly effective way to understand culture is to think of it as a set of answers to a particular problem: How does a group of human beings survive together in the world? In other words, culture is a set of behaviors, beliefs, understandings, objects, and ways of interacting that enable a group to survive with greater or lesser success and greater or lesser longevity. At some level, all human societies must answer the question of how to survive together in the world, and to some degree, each culture is a different answer to it.

In the world today and in our own society, we face extraordinary problems: hunger, poverty, inequality, violence between groups, violence within families, drug addiction, pollution, crime. The list is long. However, we are not the only people in the world ever to have faced problems. At some level, all these problems are the result of our attempt to live together as a group on this planet. Learning how other peoples in other places, and perhaps at other times as well, solved or failed to solve their problems may give us the insight to solve our own; we might learn lessons, both positive and negative, from their cultural experiences.

In some ways, the cultures of today are unique. Societies have never been as large and interconnected as many are today. They have never had the wealth that many societies have today. They have never had the level of technology, ability to communicate, or capacity to destroy that our current society has. These characteristics make it naïve to imagine that we could simply observe a different culture, adopt its ways as our own, and live happily ever after. We can no more recreate tribal culture or ancient culture or even the culture of industrialized nations from 50 years ago than we can walk through walls. But it does not, therefore, follow that the answers of others are useless to us.

In Greek drama, the notion of **hubris** is critical. It is probably best understood as excessive pride or confidence that leads to both arrogance and insolence toward others. In Greek tragedy, the hubris of characters is often their fatal flaw and leads to their downfall. Heroes such as Oedipus and Creon were doomed by their hubris.

We surely won't find that the members of other cultures have provided ready-made answers to all the problems that confront us. But to imagine ourselves as totally unique, to imagine that the experiences of other peoples and other cultures have nothing to teach us, is a form of hubris and, as in tragedy, could well lead to our downfall.

The ancient Greeks contrasted hubris with **arete**. This characteristic implies a humble striving for perfection, along with the realization that such perfection cannot be reached. With the notion of *arete* in mind, we approach the study of anthropology cheerfully and with a degree of optimism. From anthropology, we hope to learn new ways of analyzing, understanding, celebrating, and coming to terms with the enormous variations in human cultural behavior. We hope to be able to think creatively about what it means to be human beings and to use what we learn to provide insight into the issues, problems, and possibilities of our own culture. We hope that, with the help of such understanding, we will leave the world a better place than we found it.

BRINGING IT BACK HOME: THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF VIOLENCE

The holistic approach of anthropology can help us understand violence. To what extent is violence simply an ineradicable part of human nature, and to what extent is it a product of certain kinds of cultures? Have human beings always been violent, or was there an age when people lived in societies without violence? Can we hope for a future without violence, or are we condemned to ever-increasing cycles of violence?

There are no simple answers to these questions. Anthropologists, political philosophers, and others have sometimes imagined that people in early human societies led a peaceful, almost utopian existence. At other times, they have imagined such societies as a struggle of all against all: a constant battle for survival in which violence against nonfamily and nongroup members was the rule rather than the exception. Neither of these ideas seems to hold much validity.

There is no doubt that humans have often lived in societies characterized by high levels of violence. Further, violence is ancient: a recent analysis of skulls at a 430,000-year-old archaeological site in Spain shows evidence of humans killing other humans (Sala et al. 2015). But Dr. Nohemi Sala, the lead author of the study, also notes that finds at the same site also show that human ancestors cared for the sick and the dead (Gill 2015). Caring and killing are both part of the human heritage.

Cultural anthropologists have often documented violence, and sometimes warfare, in many different societies. However, anthropologists have documented societies that have extremely low levels of violence as well. These include the Chewong of the Malaysian peninsula (Howell 1989), the G/wi of central Botswana (Silberbauer 1982), and the Yanadi of the Indian state of Andhra Pradesh (Kumar 1995). The Semai, a gardening society in the central Malay Peninsula, are one of the best-documented peaceful societies. Clayton and Carole Robarchek, anthropologists who have studied the Semai for more than 30 years, report that worldview is a key factor in Semai peacefulness. Semai see themselves as "essentially helpless in a hostile and malevolent universe" and believe that virtually all activities, even the most innocuous, are fraught with danger (1992, 201). In this frightening world, they depend vitally on one another, and anything that threatens discord or violence is understood as a threat to their survival itself. Although their society is peaceful, theirs is not a worldview that many would like to share.

More recently, Steven Pinker in *The Better Angels of Our Nature* (2011) argues that humanity as a whole is becoming less violent. He claims that acts of violence, torture, and cruelty of all types, which were common in humanity's past, are far less present today. Pinker argues that the decline in violence is the result of a combination of factors including the political dominance of large state societies whose governments monopolize the use of force, the emergence of humanitarian thinking in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Europe, and the spread of commerce. Using a phrase from philosopher Peter Singer, Pinker talks of an "escalator of reason" that we use to discover that our interests are similar to those of other people, and thus, we develop empathy with them.

It is certainly true that public cruelties such as executions and animal fights, common in Europe in the nineteenth century, have become rare. However, many anthropologists are deeply skeptical of Pinker's claims. For example, anthropologist Rahul Oka and his collaborators have argued that the changes that Pinker documents are simply related to the size of societies. People, they argue, are neither more nor less violent than they have been in the

past. However, the larger a society is, the smaller the percentage of people who are involved in violence (Oka et al. 2017, E11109). Anthropologists Dean Falk and Charles Hildebolt (2017) make a similar argument, noting that evidence shows humans to be more violent than chimpanzees and human violence to be more a function of the size of a society rather than the way it is organized or the beliefs of its members. There is no "escalator of reason," merely a demographic effect.

Claims that society has become more peaceful must also confront many disturbing examples of institutionalized violence in our own society. There is little doubt that, in terms of total numbers of people killed, the twentieth century was the most violent in the history of humanity. Much of this death occurred in various forms of state-sponsored violence, from warfare to famines caused by political actions. Even when physical violence is not present, state society includes the pervasive violence of inequality and, in many cases, outright oppression. The use of torture remains an important political issue. At a news conference in early 2017, then-president Donald Trump said that torture "absolutely works" (Masters 2017), and Gina Haspel, whom he appointed director of the CIA in 2018, is widely believed to have supported torture at secret prisons in the 2000s (Shankar 2018).

Anthropology does not provide any easy answers to violence. Instead, it shows that both violence and reconciliation are very basic aspects of human and indeed nonhuman primate behavior. The sources of both peace and violence may ultimately lie in human nature. However, the ways that violence is expressed and the amount of violence present seem to be determined both by demographics and by culture. Humans will probably always have violent thoughts and desires. But we can hope to create societies in which violence is rare or, perhaps, even entirely absent.

You Decide

1. Do you believe that humankind is getting more or less violent and cruel? What evidence can you bring to support your position?
2. The Robarcheks' analysis of the Semai shows that their peaceful lifestyle is a product of both the way their society is structured and the worldviews they hold. What kind of social structures and worldviews do you think promote peace?
3. Do you believe in the possibility of a society and a world without violence? What do you think is the relationship between physical violence and less obvious forms of violence such as discrimination, inequality, and oppression?

CHAPTER SUMMARY

1. What critical themes presented in Horace Miner's essay "Body Ritual among the Nacirema" continue to draw people to anthropology? Miner's essay encourages us to think about our quest to gain knowledge and understanding of people who are different from ourselves, and our desire to know ourselves and our own culture better.

2. What is anthropology? Anthropology is a comparative study of humankind. Anthropologists study human beings in the past and the present and in every corner of the world.

3. What does it mean to say that anthropology is holistic? Anthropologists study the entire range of humans' biological, social, political, economic, and religious behavior as well as the relationships among the different aspects of human behavior in the past and present.

4. What are the main subfields of anthropology? Cultural anthropology, linguistic anthropology, archaeology, biological (physical) anthropology, and applied anthropology.

5. Does anthropology stress biological or cultural adaptation? Anthropology stresses the importance of culture in human adaptation. It asserts that critical differences among individuals are cultural rather than biological.

6. How do forensic anthropologists apply anthropology? Forensic anthropologists use their specialized knowledge of biology and culture to excavate and analyze human remains. They prepare reports that may aid in law enforcement or help bring closure to the survivors of deceased individuals.

7. What sorts of jobs do anthropology majors usually get? Anthropology is part of the liberal arts curriculum. Both the job prospects and the careers of those who study anthropology are similar to those who study other liberal arts disciplines.

8. What critical problems and ways of thinking do anthropology courses address? Anthropology courses develop three important ways of thought that apply to the broad range of occupations followed by anthropologists: (1) Anthropology focuses on understanding other groups of people within their own historical and cultural context; (2) anthropologists grapple with the question of what it means to be human by observing, collecting, recording, and attempting to understand the full range of human cultural experience; and (3) anthropology encourages us to use our understanding of other cultures to think about our own.

9. What does anthropology tell us about humans and violence? Anthropology tells us that violence is ancient and part of our human heritage. However, peacemaking and reconciliation are also part of that heritage. Nonviolent societies do exist, and we can hope to build societies with low levels of violence.

KEY TERMS

anthropology (p. 4)
applied anthropology (p. 11)
archaeology (p. 9)
arete (p. 19)
biological (or physical) anthropology (p. 7)
cultural anthropology (p. 10)
cultural relativism (p. 5)
culture (p. 4)
emic (p. 11)
ethnocentrism (ethnocentric) (p. 4)
ethnography (p. 11)
ethnology (p. 11)
etic (p. 11)
holism (holistic) (p. 6)
hubris (p. 19)
linguistic anthropology (p. 8)
society (p. 4)

Members of the All Blacks, New Zealand's National Rugby Union team, give a haka after winning an important match in South Africa. Among the Maori, the indigenous people of New Zealand, the haka is a dance or challenge with stylized gestures and facial expressions. Historically, haka were often associated with Maori warfare. However, they are also used to mark special occasions and achievements.

RODGER BOSCH/AFP via Getty Images

2 CULTURE COUNTS

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. List the major characteristics of culture.
2. Describe the role of learned behavior in culture.
3. Explain the ways in which people use symbols and classification to create meaning in the world.
4. Identify the ways in which culture can be considered a system and the ways in which it is not like a system.
5. Tell some of the ways in which culture is and is not shared, and describe the roles of norms and values in the cultural process.
6. Compare and contrast cultural and biological adaptation.
7. Give examples of the ways in which culture changes, and describe the role of conflict and consensus in culture change.

FERAL CHILDREN

EUROPEANS, as well as members of many other cultures, have often been fascinated by tales of feral or wild children. These are human children who are alleged to have grown up by themselves in the wild, apart from human civilization. Accounts of such children date to antiquity, and a website that appeared in the early 2000s claimed to document more than 80 cases between 250 and 2002 CE (Benzaquen 2006). Frequently, feral children are popularly supposed to have been raised by members of other animal species, often wolves or bears.

There is no reliable evidence that any human child has ever actually been raised by members of another species. Some of the many accounts of feral children seem to be outright fraud, but many others are probably stories about children who were abandoned because of a physical or mental disability and who survived by scavenging and begging around the edges of human settlements. Many of the best known of these children would, if they were alive today, probably be diagnosed with autism.

Because feral children are understood to grow up with little contact with other humans, they give us a way to consider popular understandings of human society and culture. Mary-Ann Ochota, an anthropologist and journalist, points out that stories of feral children almost always describe them as making animal sounds, being covered with hair, having claw-like nails and other animal features, and unable to eat cooked food (Ochota 2017). Other than making animal sounds, it is extremely unlikely that any children have these traits. However, these characteristics position such children as close to animals; their lack of culture renders them nonhuman.

Two of the most famous feral children were Peter the Wild Boy and Victor the Wild Boy of Aveyron (Photo 2.1) (Newton 2002). Peter was found in 1725, in what is today northern

Germany.[1] Brought to the court of King George I in England, he was a well-known curiosity for the rest of his long life. Given to the care of court physician John Arbuthnot, who tried to educate him, Peter acquired the ability to use some simple words and perform a few tasks but made little progress beyond that. He disappeared for more than three months in the summer of 1751 and, after he was found, was forced to wear a brass collar engraved with his name and address.

Victor lived in the forests around Aveyron in southern France in the last years of the 1790s. Like Peter, Victor was unable to speak, which, along with his bizarre behavior, garnered much attention, first in Aveyron and later in Paris. Like Peter, Victor was given to the care of a physician, Jean-Marc Gaspard Itard, who attempted to teach him to speak and to perform rudimentary tasks. And like Arbuthnot's, Itard's attempts at instruction were largely ineffective.

Peter and Victor were famous in their day. Some of the most important intellectuals of the era wrote about Peter, including Jonathan Swift (author of *Gulliver's Travels*), Daniel Defoe (author of *Robinson Crusoe* and many other works), and the Scottish jurist and early evolutionist James Burnett, Lord Monboddo. Victor was also the subject of extensive commentary during his lifetime, and his fame has continued into modern times. His life in both realistic and fictionalized form appears in many novels and films, particularly French director Francois Truffaut's 1970 film *L'Enfant Sauvage* (*The Wild Child*).

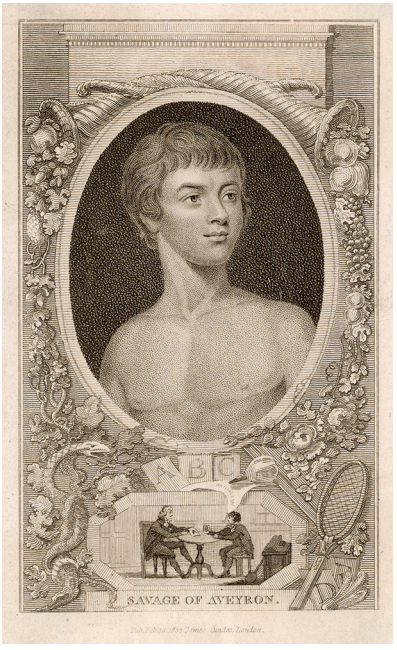

PHOTO 2.1 Victor, the wild child of Aveyron is shown in an etching from about 1800. The smaller picture at the bottom shows the physician J.-M. G. Itard's largely unsuccessful attempt to educate Victor.

Chronicle/Alamy Stock Photo

So, what is it about feral children that fascinated people in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and continues to fascinate today? Swift, Defoe, and Monboddo provided different answers: Swift's work is a critique of the culture of his era. Swift imagined Peter, who in reality was mute, trying to comprehend the alien social customs of the British aristocracy. Thus, through Peter, the culture of his era was made visible and shown to be corrupt and absurd.

Defoe (1726) approached Peter from a more challenging angle. He wondered about the degree to which Peter really was a human being. Did he have a soul? Peter was human in form, but he could neither speak nor participate in human society in any meaningful way. Unable to speak, he was perhaps unable to think as well. Because Peter lacked these abilities, his existence was a horrible lonely burden.

For Monboddo, Peter and other wild children proved that little or nothing was natural to humanity: Speech, upright posture, walking on two feet are all capacities that people had to be taught through a process of civilization. Monboddo used this idea to argue that

[1] Like other "wild" children, Peter was not wild at all. He was a mentally handicapped individual who had been beaten and thrown out of his house when his father remarried and his new stepmother did not want to take care of him (Wrangham 2019, 52). Victor most likely had autism (Wing 2013).

orangutans were humans too; they had the capacities for human characteristics but had not learned to use them (Benzaquen 2006, 131).

Victor was captured and displayed in the era immediately following the French Revolution and the Reign of Terror, the period after the revolution in which thousands were put to death by guillotine. In this context, he too raised important questions. The philosophers of the French Revolution wanted to make humanity over. Many, following the philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau, believed that humans, in their natural form, free of the constraints of (European) culture, lacked morals but were essentially noble. Was Victor a "noble savage" without culture? Could proper education make him into a new and better type of person? Did Itard's failure to educate Victor mean that humans without society were so degraded that they could not be brought into society?

DEFINING CULTURE

Because Peter and Victor were almost certainly individuals with profound autism (and in Peter's case, perhaps a rare chromosomal disorder as well [Kennedy 2011]), observations of them could not have answered questions about humanity without culture. However, the writings and questions that surrounded them and the continued interest in cases of feral children today draw our attention to the nature of culture and the relationship between culture and human nature. The persistence of stories about wild children seems to make clear that, without the constraints, assumptions, and patterns imposed by culture, it is extraordinarily difficult to express our human qualities and abilities. But what is culture?

Although coming up with a useful, brief definition of culture is difficult, an anthropologist from Mars observing the many different human cultures might discover six characteristics shared by all cultures:

1. Cultures are made up of learned behaviors. People are not born knowing their culture. They learn it through a process called enculturation.
2. Cultures all involve classification systems and symbols.
3. Cultures are patterned and integrated. Thus, changes in one aspect of culture affect other aspects. However, elements of culture do not necessarily work smoothly with one another.
4. Cultures are shared. Although there may be disagreement about many aspects of a culture, there must be considerable consensus as well.
5. Cultures are adaptive and include information about how to survive in the world, but cultures can contain much that is maladaptive.
6. Cultures are subject to change. Whether propelled by their internal dynamics or acted upon by outside forces, cultures are always in flux.

Based on this list, we might define culture as the learned, symbolic, at least partially adaptive, and ever-changing patterns of behavior and meaning shared by members of a group.

Although anthropologists agree on the basic characteristics of culture, they disagree on their relative importance, how to study them, and, indeed, on the goals of anthropology itself. For example, some anthropologists are deeply concerned with observable behavior. Other anthropologists wish to comprehend the ways in which other people understand their world. Some anthropologists hope to find general laws of human culture. Others are more concerned with describing specific aspects of particular cultures. These disagreements reflect different theoretical positions within anthropology. For our purposes, an **anthropological theory** is a set of propositions about which aspects of culture are critical, how they should be studied, and what the goal of studying them should be. Although those who hold different theoretical perspectives may insist that there is a right way and a wrong way to do anthropology, we suggest that theoretical perspectives are more like different windows through which one may view culture. Just as two windows may have views that overlap or views that show different scenes, perspectives on culture may overlap or reveal different aspects. Some of the major theoretical perspectives in anthropology are summarized in Table 2.1.

In this chapter, we examine each element of our definition of culture. Each is a common characteristic of all human groups. However, each also raises questions, problems, and contradictions. Through examining these elements, we come to a keener appreciation of the nature of culture and, ultimately, what it means to be human.

CULTURE IS MADE UP OF LEARNED BEHAVIORS

Just about everything that is animate learns. Your dog, your cat, even your fish show some learned behavior. But, as far as we know, no other creature has as much learned behavior as human beings. Almost every aspect of our lives is layered with learning. Our heart beats, our eyes blink, and our knees respond reflexively to a doctor's rubber mallet, but to get much beyond that, we need learning. Food is a good example. Humans must eat; that much is determined biologically. However, we do not just eat; our culture teaches us what is edible and what is not. We decline many things that are nutritious as not being food. Many insects, for example, are perfectly edible. The philosopher Aristotle was particularly fond of eating cicadas, and northern Europeans ate some species of beetles well into the nineteenth century. Yet most Americans have learned that insects are not food, and they will go hungry, to the point of starvation, before knowingly eating them (although we are perfectly willing to eat them if we are unaware we are doing so; for example, Natural Red #4, a common food dye, is made from cochineal, a type of beetle). Further, we eat particular things at particular times, in particular places, and with particular people. For example, although it is acceptable to eat popcorn at the movies, you would be unlikely to have lamb chops and asparagus or a nice stir-fry at most movie theaters.

We sometimes think of learning as an aspect of childhood, but in every society, human beings learn their culture continuously. We are socialized from the moment of our births to the time of our deaths. Although large demands for labor and responsible behavior may be placed

TABLE 2.1 ■ Major Theoretical Perspectives in Anthropology

Theory Name	Understanding of Culture	Some Critical Thinkers
Nineteenth-Century Evolutionism	All societies progress, sharing a single universal culture that they possess in different amounts.	E. B. Tylor (1832–1917) L. H. Morgan (1818–1881)
Turn-of-the-Twentieth-Century Sociology	Groups of people share sets of symbols and practices that bind them into societies.	Émile Durkheim (1858–1917) Max Weber (1864–1920)
The American Boasian Tradition	Cultures are the results of shared histories and must be described holistically.	Franz Boas (1858–1942) Margaret Mead (1901–1978)
Functionalism	Social practices support societies' structure or fill the needs of its members.	A. R. Radcliffe-Brown (1881–1955) Bronislaw Malinowski (1884–1942)
Culture and Personality	Culture is personality writ large. It is shaped by psychological forces.	Ruth Benedict (1887–1948) Edward Sapir (1884–1939)
Cultural Ecology and Neo-evolutionism	Culture is the way in which human beings adapt to the environment and make their lives secure.	Julian Steward (1902–1972) Leslie White (1900–1975)
Ecological Materialism	Physical and economic causes give rise to cultures and explain changes within them.	Morton Fried (1923–1986) Marvin Harris (1927–2001)
Cognitive Anthropology	Culture is a mental template that determines how members of a society understand their worlds.	Ward Goodenough (1919–2013) James Spradley (1933–1982)
Structural Anthropology	Universal patterns in human cultures can be discovered through the analysis of myths. These patterns continue to be active in current culture.	Claude Lévi-Strauss (1908–2009) Rodney Needham (1923–2006)
Evolutionary Anthropology	Culture is the visible expression of an underlying evolved and adaptive genetic code.	E. O. Wilson (1929–) John Tooby (1952–)
Anthropology and Gender	The ways in which societies understand sexuality are central to understanding culture.	Michelle Rosaldo (1944–1981) Don Kullick (1960–)

Theory Name	Understanding of Culture	Some Critical Thinkers
Symbolic and Interpretive Anthropology	Culture is the way in which members of a society understand who they are and give meaning to life.	Mary Douglas (1921–2007) Clifford Geertz (1926–2006)
Practice Theory	Culture emerges from the dynamic relationship between social constraints and individual choices.	Pierre Bourdieu (1930–2002) Sherry Ortner (1941–)
Postmodernism	The constraints of observation and writing play a critical role in our attempts to analyze culture.	Renato Rosaldo (1941–) James Clifford (1945–)
Globalization	Culture is best analyzed as the global flow of identity, symbolism, money, and information, within a context of inequality.	Arjun Appadurai (1949–) David Harvey (1935–)

Please note that theories in anthropology are complex and cannot be summed accurately in a single line. There are many outstanding books about anthropological theory including McGee and Warms, Anthropological Theory: An Introductory History.

on children in many societies, all humans remain physically, emotionally, and intellectually immature well into their teen years and perhaps into their early twenties. This lengthy period of immaturity has profound implications. First, it allows time for an enormous amount of childhood learning. This means that very few specific behaviors need to be under direct genetic or biological control. Second, it demands human cultures be designed to provide relatively stable environments that allow time for this learning to take place.

Infants grow into children and later into adults not simply as humans but as humans with particular kinds of identities—Tlingit, Trobriand Islanders, Britons, or Canadians and so on. Every society has both formal and informal means of transmitting its typical attitudes, motivations, values, perceptions, and beliefs so that children grow up to be cultural insiders and so that the society is reproduced socially as well as biologically. The process of learning to be a member of a particular cultural group is called **enculturation**.

As an example, consider child-rearing among the Inuit, a hunting people of the Arctic (Map 2.1). The Inuit teach their children to deal with a world that is a dangerously problematic place, in which making wrong decisions might well mean death (Briggs 1991). To survive in this harsh environment, Inuit must learn to maintain a "constant state of alertness" and an "experimental way of living." Therefore, developing skills for solving problems quickly and spontaneously is central to Inuit child-rearing. Children are brought up to constantly test their physical skills to extend them and to learn their capacity for pain and endurance. The goal of Inuit child-rearing is to create adults who have *silatuniq*, literally have "a big world" (Annahatak 2014, 28). People who have achieved *silatuniq* understand the interconnections among things and are respectful in their ways and interactions.

MAP 2.1 ■ Location of the Inuit

Source: Nanda, *Cultural Anthropology*, 12th edition, page 58. SAGE Publishing, 2020.

Inuit children learn largely by observing their elders. Children are discouraged from asking questions. Rather, when confronted with a problem situation, they are expected to observe closely, to reason, and to find solutions independently. They watch, practice, and then they are tested, frequently by adults asking them questions based on the idea of *isummaksaiyuq*, a northern Baffin Island Inuit term meaning to "cause (or cause to increase) thought" (Briggs 1998, 5). Some questions are very practical. For example, as they travel on the featureless, snow-covered tundra, an adult may ask a child, "Where are we?" or "Have you ever been here before?" Others are existentially challenging. Adults may ask children "Why don't you kill your baby brother?" or "Your mother's going to die—look, she's cut her finger—do you want to come live with *me*?" Such questions are not considered cruel. Rather, they force children to grapple with issues of grave consequence (Briggs 2000, 161).

Play is a critical part of Inuit child-rearing. Inuit games prepare children for the rigors of the arctic environment by stressing hand-eye coordination, problem solving, and physical strength and endurance. Some games involve learning by taking objects apart and trying to put them back together. This process develops careful attention to details and relationships, patient trial and error, and the mental recording of results for future reference. Many games stress the body and test the limits of the individual's psychological and physical endurance (Nelson 1899). For example, in the ear pull game (Photo 2.2), a thin loop of leather is positioned behind the ears of each of two competitors, who then pull away from each other until one gives up in pain (World Eskimo-Indian Olympics 2016).

In addition to being physically adept and independent, Inuit children must learn to be cooperative and emotionally restrained. Living in closely knit and often isolated camps, the Inuit avoid expressions of anger or aggression. They prize reason, judgment, and emotional control, and believe that these characteristics grow naturally as children grow.

The Inuit believe that children have both the ability and the wish to learn. Thus, educating a child consists of providing the necessary information, which the child will remember sooner or later. Scolding is seen as futile. Children will learn when they are ready; there is no point in

PHOTO 2.2 The Inuit ear pull game is a harsh test of physical endurance. Contestants pull against each other until one can no longer endure the pain. Here George Brown, age 12, competes in the 2007 World Eskimo-Indian Olympics in Anchorage, Alaska.

AP Photo/Al Grillo

forcing children to learn something before they are ready to remember it. Inuit elders believe that frequent scolding makes children hostile, rebellious, and impervious to the opinions of others.

The study of enculturation has a central place in the history of anthropology and gave rise to some of its classic works. Margaret Mead's 1928 book *Coming of Age in Samoa* was a best seller and a landmark work that changed how Americans looked at childhood and culture. Mead and others who studied childhood learning are known as **culture and personality** theorists. Culture and personality theorists held that cultures could best be understood by examining the patterns of child-rearing and considering their relation to adult lives and social institutions. Culture and personality theory was extremely influential from the 1920s until the 1950s. Today, the process of learning culture remains critical to many anthropologists, especially gender researchers, those who approach culture from a psychological perspective, and those who focus on practice theory. Some recent work in enculturation includes *A World of Babies* (DeLoache and Gottlieb 2000), a series of essays in which anthropologists describe the advice that might be given to new parents in seven different cultures. *Play and the Human Condition* (2015), Thomas Henricks's examination of the way play allows the social meanings behind play, and Kathleen Barlow and Bambi Chapin's (2010) collection of essays about mothering.

CULTURE IS THE WAY HUMANS USE SYMBOLS TO CLASSIFY THEIR WORLD AND GIVE IT MEANING

Consider this: Can you really see your environment? For example, when you walk into a classroom, you notice some things but not others. You see your friends and other students, the professor, the video equipment, and so on. You might spend an entire semester without ever seeing the cracks in the ceiling, the pattern of the carpeting, or the color of the walls. Yet these things are as physically present as the chairs and your friends.

You see certain things in the classroom and overlook others because you mentally organize the contents of the classroom with respect to your role as a student. In that context, some of the things in the room, such as the professor and your friends, are relevant; other things, such as the color of the walls are much less so. It is virtually impossible to see things without organizing and evaluating them in some manner. If you paid as much attention to the cracks in the wall, the patterns on the floor, and the humming of the ventilation system as you did to the professor's lecture, you would not only likely fail the class but also live in a world that was overwhelming and impossibly confusing. We can only comprehend the world and act in it by fitting our perceptions and experiences into systems of organization and classification. A human without this ability would be paralyzed, frozen by an overwhelming bombardment of sensations.

Methods of organizing and classifying are typical of groups. You are not the only one who thinks that the students and professors in a classroom are more important than the ceiling tiles; all students and professors probably share that perception. Anthropologists have long proposed that culture is a shared mental model that people use to organize, to classify, and ultimately to understand their world. A key way in which this model is expressed is through language, a symbolic system.

Different cultures have different models for understanding and speaking about the world. For instance, in English, the verb *smoke* describes the action of ingesting a cigarette, and the verb *drink* describes the action of consuming a liquid. However, in the Bamana language (also known as Bambara), spoken by the Bambara of Mali, the verb *min* is used both for smoking and for drinking. Americans classify rainbows as objects of beauty and frequently point them out to one another. However, Lacandon Maya in southern Mexico classify rainbows as dangerous and frightening. Pointing them out to other people is highly inappropriate. For them, rainbows are unlucky because they hold back the rain. Snakes, rather than pots of gold, are found under them, and they are associated with particular types of ghosts.

Anthropologists who are particularly interested in describing the systems of organization and classification different cultures use often use a theoretical perspective called ethnoscience. Generally, these anthropologists are interested in capturing the understanding of members of a culture. Ethnoscience is one position or technique within a broader perspective called **cognitive anthropology**, which focuses on the relationship between the mind and society. Other anthropologists believe that although the details of a system of classification may be unique to an individual culture, there are grand overall patterns that are common to all humanity. The study of this aspect of culture is called structural anthropology.