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UNIT 1 Anthropological Perspectives

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1. **A Dispute in Donggo: Fieldwork and Ethnography**, John Monaghan and Peter Just, *Social and Cultural Anthropology: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press, 2000

In this account of **dispute resolution in an Indonesian community**, the authors illustrate the unique features of **anthropological fieldwork**. **Participant observation**, involving prolonged exposure to the daily lives of people, allows for contextual understanding of events and motivations that go beyond superficial appearances.

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2. **Eating Christmas in the Kalahari**, Richard Borshay Lee, *Natural History*, December 1969

Anthropologist Richard Borshay Lee gives an account of the misunderstanding and confusion that often accompany **cross-cultural experience**. In this case, he violated a basic principle of the !Kung Bushmen's social relations—**food sharing**.

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3. **Tricking and Tripping: Fieldwork on Prostitution in the Era of AIDS**, Claire E. Sterk, *Tricking and Tripping: Prostitution in the Era of AIDS*, Social Change Press, 2000

As unique as Claire E. Sterk's report on **prostitution** may be, she discusses issues common to anthropologists wherever they conduct **fieldwork**: How does one build trusting relationships with informants and what are the **ethical obligations** of an anthropologist toward them?

14

4. **Can White Men Jump?: Ethnicity, Genes, Culture, and Success**, David Shenk from *The Genius in All of Us*, Doubleday, 2010

Clusters of **ethnic and geographical athletic success** prompt **suspensions of hidden genetic advantages**. The real advantages are much more cultural, more nuanced, and less hidden.

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UNIT 2 Culture and Communication

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5. **How Language Shapes Thought**, Lera Boroditsky, *Scientific American*, February 2011

As the author observes, each **language** contains a way of perceiving, categorizing, and making meaning in the world, **an invaluable guidebook** developed and **honed by our ancestors**. But, do **differences in language create differences in thought** or is it the other way around? The answer, says the author, is both.

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The concepts in bold italics are developed in the article. For further expansion, please refer to the Topic Guide.

6. **Do You Speak American?**, Robert MacNeil, *USA Today Magazine*, January 2005
 It is a common assumption that the mass media is making all Americans speak in a similar manner. **Linguists** point out, however, that while some national trends in language are apparent, **regional speech differences** are not only thriving, but in some places they are becoming even more distinctive. 30
7. **Fighting for Our Lives**, Deborah Tannen, *The Argument Culture*, Random House, 1998
 In America today, a **pervasive warlike tone seems to prevail in public dialogue**. The prevailing belief is that there are only two sides to an issue and opposition leads to truth. Often, however, an issue is more like a crystal, with many sides, and the truth is in the complex middle, not in the **oversimplified extremes**. 35
8. **Shakespeare in the Bush**, Laura Bohannon, *Natural History*, August/September 1966
 It is often claimed that great literature has **cross-cultural** significance. In this article, Laura Bohannon describes the difficulties she encountered and the lessons she learned as she attempted to relate the story of **Hamlet** to the Tiv of West Africa in their own **language**. 46



UNIT 3

The Organization of Society and Culture

Unit Overview 50

9. **How Cooking Frees Men**, Richard Wrangham, from *Catching Fire*, Basic Books, 2009
 The classic explanation for why there is a **universal sexual division of labor in foraging societies** has to do with **men hunting and women gathering**. Even more important, says Wrangham, is the advent of **cooked food**. This dietary change has fostered **anatomical and physiological changes** as well. 52
10. **When Cousins Do More than Kiss**, Anthony Layng, *USA Today Magazine*, September 2009
 Given the variability of **incest taboos** cross-culturally, it is very unlikely that humans have some sort of **instinct against inbreeding** or that **genetic closeness** is the major concern. The more likely explanation is that requiring young people to find their mates outside their group **fostered cooperation and exchange of food** between hunting and gathering bands. 57
11. **The Inuit Paradox**, Patricia Gadsby, *Discover*, October 2004
 The **traditional diet** of the Far North, with its **high-protein, high-fat** content, shows that there are no essential foods—only **essential nutrients**. 59
12. **Ties That Bind**, Peter M. Whiteley, *Natural History*, November 2004
 The **Hopi** people offer **gifts** in a much broader range of circumstances than people in **Western Cultures** do, tying individuals and groups to each other and to the realm of the spirits. 63
13. **Cell Phones, Sharing, and Social Status in an African Society**, Daniel Jordan Smith, *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 40(3): 496–523, 2006
 Although the economic dimensions of **Nigeria's emerging cell phone culture** are important, much of its cell phone-related behavior requires a **social rather than an economic explanation**. 66



UNIT 4

Other Families, Other Ways

Unit Overview

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14. **When Brothers Share a Wife: Among Tibetans, the Good Life Relegates Many Women to Spinsterhood**, Melvyn C. Goldstein, *Natural History*, March 1987 (Updated 2011)

While the custom of **fraternal polyandry** relegated many Tibetan women to spinsterhood, this unusual **marriage** form promoted personal security and economic well-being for its participants.

74

15. **Death without Weeping**, Nancy Scheper-Hughes, *Natural History*, October 1989 (Updated 2011)

In the Shantytowns of Brazil, the seeming indifference of mothers who allow some of their **children** to die is a **survival strategy**, geared to circumstances in which only some may live.

79

16. **Arranging a Marriage in India**, Serena Nanda, *Stumbling Toward Truth: Anthropologists at Work*, Waveland Press, 2000

Arranging a marriage in India is far too serious a business for the young and inexperienced. Instead, the parents make the decision on the basis of the families' **social position**, reputation, and ability to get along.

85

17. **Who Needs Love!: In Japan, Many Couples Don't**, Nicholas D. Kristof, *The New York Times*, February 11, 1996

Paradoxically, **Japanese families** seem to survive, not because husbands and wives love each other more than American couples do, but rather because they perhaps love each other less. And as **love marriages** increase, with the compatibility factor becoming more important in the decision to marry, the **divorce rate** is rising.

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UNIT 5

Gender and Status

Unit Overview

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18. **The Berdache Tradition**, Walter L. Williams, *The Spirit and the Flesh*, (Beacon Press, 1986, 1992)

Not all societies agree with the **Western cultural view** that all humans are either women or men. In fact, many Native American cultures recognize an **alternative role** called the "**berdache**," a morphological male who has a non-masculine character. This is just one way for a society to recognize and assimilate some **atypical individuals** without imposing a change on them or stigmatizing them as deviants.

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19. **The Hijras: An Alternative Gender in India**, Serena Nanda, *Adapted from an article in Manushi*, vol. 72, 1992.

The **transgender hijra of India** form structured households and communities and, as a caste, **fulfill roles that are rooted in social and religious tradition**. As Serena Nanda notes, cross-cultural understandings such as this represent a challenge to the **binary sex/gender notions of the West**.

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20. **Sexual Orientation Differences as Deficits: Science and Stigma in the History of American Psychology**, Gregory M. Herek, *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, November 2010

Until recently, health professionals defined **homosexuality** in the United States as a mental illness. This **differences as deficits model** resulted in non-heterosexuals being put in the same category as rapists and child molesters. They were arrested in their homes, fired from their jobs, and even subjected to medical experimentation to correct their "problem." This is a classic example of how **scientific theories, research methods, and clinical practices** often **incorporate and reproduce values** to the detriment of society's less powerful groups.

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The concepts in bold italics are developed in the article. For further expansion, please refer to the Topic Guide.

21. **Where Fat Is a Mark of Beauty**, Ann M. Simmons, *Los Angeles Times*, September 30, 1998
In a **rite of passage**, some Nigerian girls spend months gaining weight and learning customs in a **“fattening room.”** A woman’s rotundity is seen as a sign of **good health, prosperity, and feminine beauty.** 116
22. **Missing Girls**, Michelle Goldberg, from *The Means of Reproduction*, Penguin, 2009
Motivated by economic need and runaway consumerism and fueled by **modern technology**, such as ultrasound, **sex selection in favor of sons** has become **a tool for limiting population** in much of Asia. The resulting **imbalance in the sex ratio threatens to impede women’s rights, destabilize entire regions, and prevent men from marrying at all.** 118
23. **Rising Number of Dowry Deaths in India**, Amanda Hitchcock, International Committee of the Fourth International, July 4, 2001
Traditionally, a **dowry** in India allowed a woman to become a member of her husband’s family with her own wealth. However, with the development of a **cash economy, increased consumerism, and a status-striving society**, heightened demands for dowry and the inability of many brides’ families to meet such demands have led to thousands of deaths each year. 130
24. **Trial by Fire**, J. Malcolm Garcia, *Mother Jones*, January/February 2011
For many **Afghan women**, the only escape from **spousal abuse is to douse themselves in kerosene and light a match.** There is one prosecutor who is risking the lives of herself and her family to **bring the instigators to justice.** 133
25. **Murder in Amman**, Rana Hussein, from *Murder in the Name of Honour*, Oneworld Publications, 2009
As journalist Rana Hussein seeks to understand the **“honor killing”** of young women in **Jordanian society**, she finds that, to a lesser extent, the **victims include the family and even the murderer.** 137
26. **Is Islam Misogynistic?**, Nicholas D. Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn from *Half the Sky*, Knopf, 2009
Some Muslims and non-Muslims cite the **Koran** as the basis for the **suppression of women** in addition to **anti-Western terrorism.** However, a careful study of the text, say some historians, reveals that both the Prophet Muhammad and the Koran itself were more progressive than they have been given credit for and that much of the **patriarchy and aggressiveness associated with Islam is more culturally based than religious in origin.** 143



UNIT 6 Religion, Belief, and Ritual

- Unit Overview** 148
27. **Shamanisms: Past and Present**, David Kozak, *Religion and Culture*, Pearson Prentice Hall, 2008
This article explains how few generalizations about **shamanism** do justice to the **varying social contexts** and individual **cultural histories** of the shamans, and discusses the past **perceptual biases** on the part of ethnographic observers. 150
28. **The Adaptive Value of Religious Ritual**, Richard Sosis, *American Scientist*, March/April 2004
Rituals promote **group cohesion** by requiring members to engage in behavior that is too costly to fake. Groups that do so are more likely to attain their **collective goals** than the groups whose members are less committed. 160

29. **Understanding Islam**, Kenneth Jost, *CQ Researcher*, November 3, 2005
As the world's second largest religion after Christianity, **Islam** teaches **piety, virtue, and tolerance**. Yet, with the emphasis of some Islamists on a **strong relationship between religion and state**, and with an increasing number of Islamic militants calling for **violence against the West**, communication and mutual understanding are becoming more important than ever. 166
30. **The Secrets of Haiti's Living Dead**, Gino Del Guercio, *Harvard Magazine*, January/February 1986
In seeking scientific documentation of the existence of zombies, anthropologist Wade Davis found himself looking beyond the stereotypes and mysteries of **voodoo**, and directly into a cohesive system of **social control** in rural Haiti. 171
31. **Body Ritual among the Nacirema**, Horace Miner, *American Anthropologist*, June 1956
The **rituals**, beliefs, and **taboos** of the Nacirema provide us with a test case of the objectivity of ethnographic description and show us the extremes to which human behavior can go. 175
32. **Baseball Magic**, George Gmelch, Original Work, 2011
Professional baseball players, like Trobriand Islanders, often resort to **magic**, in **situations of chance and uncertainty**. As irrational as it may seem, magic creates confidence, competence, and control in the practitioner. 178



UNIT 7 Sociocultural Change

Unit Overview

33. **Why Can't People Feed Themselves?**, Frances Moore Lappé and Joseph Collins, *Food First: Beyond the Myth of Scarcity*, Random House, 1977 (Updated 2011)
When **colonial governments** force the conversion of **subsistence farms** to **cash crop plantations**, peasants are driven into marginal lands or into a large pool of cheap labor. In either case, the authors maintain their stand that the farmers are no longer able to feed themselves. 184
34. **The Arrow of Disease**, Jared Diamond, *Discover*, October 1992
The most deadly weapon **colonial Europeans** carried to other continents was their germs. The most intriguing question to be answered here is, why did the flow of **disease** not move in the opposite direction? 186
35. **The Americanization of Mental Illness**, Ethan Watters, *The New York Times*, January 8, 2010
According to some anthropologists and cross-cultural psychiatrists, **mental illness has varied in time and place** much more than previously thought. **American-led globalization, however, is undermining local conceptions of self and modes of healing** and, says Watters, is **"homogenizing the way the world goes mad."** 193
36. **The Price of Progress**, John Bodley, *Victims of Progress*, Mayfield Publishing, 1998
As **traditional cultures** are sacrificed in the process of **modernization**, tribal peoples not only lose the security, autonomy, and quality of life they once had, but they also become **powerless, second-class citizens** who are discriminated against and exploited by the dominant society. 200
37. **Last of Their Kind**, Wade Davis, *Scientific American*, September 2010
Within the next generation, we may **eliminate half of the world's several thousand existing cultures**. This represents an enormous loss if one values the **languages and the diversity of adaptations** they represent. There are so many **lessons they have yet to teach us about coping with our own future**. 206

38. The Tractor Invasion , Laura Graham, <i>Cultural Survival Quarterly</i> , Summer 2009 The <i>Brazilian Cerrado</i> is one of the world's most <i>biologically diverse</i> tropical Savanna regions. Its <i>indigenous people</i> are struggling to survive the onslaught of <i>agribusiness, deforestation, environmental pollution, and exotic diseases</i> . What legal rights they have to the land are being trampled and their cries for help are largely ignored.	216
39. What Native Peoples Deserve , Roger Sandall, <i>Commentary</i> , May 2005 What should be done about <i>endangered enclave societies</i> in the midst of a modern nation such as Brazil? The main priority, says Roger Sandall, must be to ensure that no one should have to play the role of <i>historical curiosity</i> and that those who want to <i>participate in the modern world</i> should be able to do so, whether on the reservation or off it.	221
40. Being Indigenous in the 21st Century , Wilma Mankiller, <i>Cultural Survival Quarterly</i> , Spring 2009 With a <i>shared sense of history</i> and a growing set of tools, the <i>world's indigenous peoples</i> are moving into <i>a future of their own making</i> without losing sight of who they are and where they come from.	226
41. Population Seven Billion , Robert Kunzig, <i>National Geographic</i> , January 2011 With the <i>world's population rising by several billion</i> from the current seven billion, inevitable questions arise as to how this <i>will impact the quality of life as well as the condition of Planet Earth</i> .	229
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