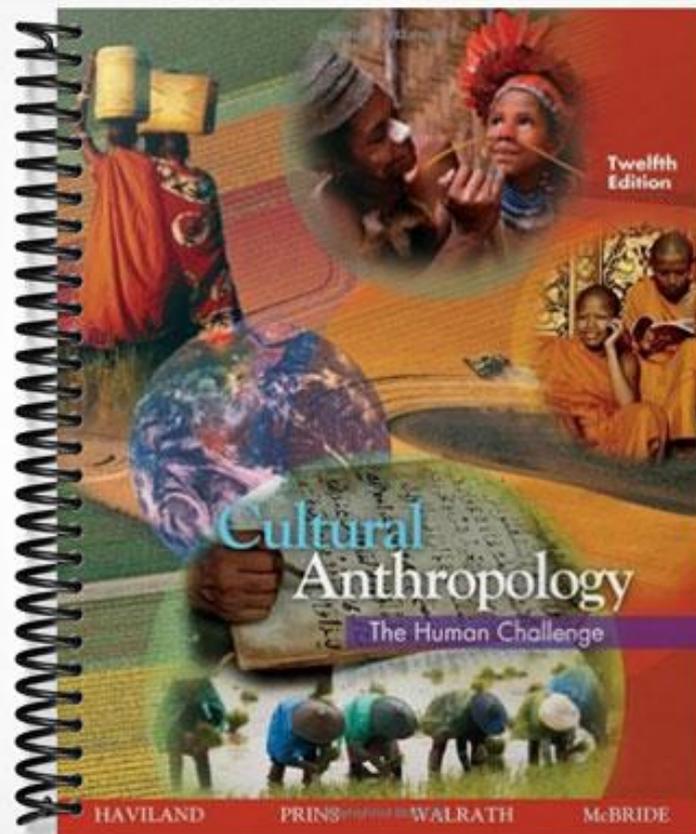


SOLUTIONS MANUAL



Chapter 2

The Characteristics of Culture

Synopsis

Chapter 2 presents the fundamental anthropological concept of culture. It is learned, shared, based on symbols, integrated as a well-structured system, and dynamic. Through culture and its many constructions, the human species has secured not only its survival but its expansion as well, using culture as a primary tool for individual and social adaptation. The chapter concludes by considering whether it is possible for anthropologists to evaluate and compare cultures.

What Students Should Learn From Chapter 2

1. the concept of culture
2. fundamental characteristics of culture
3. the relationship between culture and adaptation
4. the relationship between culture, society and the individual
5. the evaluation of cultural diversity

Review of Chapter

Questions explored: What is culture? Why do cultures exist? Are some cultures better than others?

This chapter provides a basic introduction to the concept of **culture**, which the authors define as "a society's shared and socially transmitted ideas, values, and perceptions, which are used to make sense of experience and which generate behavior and are reflected in that behavior." Basic to the concept of culture is **enculturation**, the process through which culture is transmitted from one generation to the next.

The Amish are given as an example of a **subculture**, specifically an **ethnic group** which shares the same **ethnicity**, or expression of cultural ideas through shared ancestry, language, customs and beliefs, introducing the idea of subcultural variation and **pluralistic societies**.

The characteristics of culture are presented as learned, shared, mediated by **symbols**, integrated and dynamic. Broadly speaking, a society's cultural features fall within three categories: **social structure**, "the rule-governed relationships that hold a society together,"

infrastructure (subsistence practices), and **superstructure** (ideology). (The authors refer to this schema as the “Barrel Model of Culture.”) They discuss the Kapauku Papuans extensively as an illustration of how economic, social, and ideological aspects of a culture are integrated. While being reasonably consistent, cultures also contain the potential for conflict and the capacity for change.

Adaptation, the process by which organisms adjust to their ecological niches, is achieved in human beings primarily through culture. The text points out that people act on their perceptions and that some cultural adaptations are maladaptive, as adaptations are relative to particular times and places. All cultures must deal effectively with primary human needs in order to survive, and must balance individual self-interest against the demands of society as a whole.

The anthropologist’s natural tendency toward **ethnocentrism**, the belief that one’s own culture is superior, must be replaced with **cultural relativism**, the idea that one should initially suspend judgment on other peoples’ practices in order to understand them on their own cultural terms. Judgment is postponed, not avoided. If a culture is essentially a maintenance system to ensure the continued well-being of a group of people, it may be considered successful if it leads to the survival of a society in a way that members find reasonably fulfilling.

Features

Anthropologists of Note

Bronislaw Malinowski

Anthropology Applied—*New Houses for Apache Indians*

Anthropologist George Esber helped design housing specifically suited to Apache domestic culture. By working with both the architects and the Apache Indians, Esber was able to develop housing that met the sociocultural needs of Apache etiquette.

Biocultural Connection—*Adult Human Stature and the Effects of Culture*

This inset explores the relationship between class stratification and height, providing evidence from skeletal remains that stature differences were characteristics of stratified societies, where there was variable access to nutritional resources.

Visual Counterpoint—*Enculturation*

Using a visual image from North America and one from Guatemala, the significance of the process of enculturation is illustrated as a central component of all human societies.

Key Terms

cultural relativism, culture, enculturation, ethnic group, ethnicity, ethnocentrism, gender, infrastructure, pluralistic society, social structure, society, subculture, superstructure, symbol

Applying Anthropology

1. *Breaking News in Anthropology*

The field of anthropology is experiencing a new vigor as the expertise of anthropologists is recognized in the resolution of world problems. Ask students to look at recent newspaper and magazine articles, including the weblink below, “Breaking News in Anthropology,” for news related to topics in this chapter. Encourage them to think about how anthropologists might contribute to our understanding of these current events. Have them choose three issues and write a three-to-five-page essay suggesting how anthropological knowledge might be applied.

The online weblink “Breaking News in Anthropology” is part of the Anthropology Resource Center and can be reached through the weblink <http://thomsonedu.com/>. After selecting the discipline of Anthropology under “Humanities and Social Sciences,” go directly to the Anthropology Resource Center for a wide range of resources that bring anthropology to life through pictures, interviews, news items, interactive displays, maps, and more. “Breaking News” is *continually updated* with the latest web news items related to topics and concerns of anthropology. (*This site is passcode protected for both instructors and students.*)

2. *Culture Shock*

The overwhelming experience of living in a culture (or subculture) very different from your own is sometimes known as “culture shock.” Travelers, immigrants, and anthropologists often have difficulties trying to adjust to a new culture. Common reactions are confusion, disgust, homesickness, irritability, boredom, or withdrawal. Ask students to write about their own experiences (perhaps the first year of college in a strange town). Did they make any cross-cultural bloopers? How were their usual values and assumptions challenged? How did they feel? How did they finally make the adjustment?

3. *Defining Culture*

Ask students to write their own definitions of culture. Then hand out a worksheet that lists half a dozen classic definitions of the term. Ask for six volunteers and have each one of them read aloud her/his own definition along with the classic one that it most resembles.

4. *Cross-cultural interview*

Offer students a taste of anthropological fieldwork by having them interview someone from a significantly different cultural niche than their own. Require them to do a bit of background research first, such as looking up their informant’s country in an encyclopedia—and have them take a map of the country with them so the person can show exactly where they come from. Choose a focus for the interview, such as cultural adjustment, and provide several core questions. For example, if interviewing a foreigner in the US: Why/when did you come to the US? What aspects of American culture did you find most shocking at first? Which things have you found difficult to adjust to? What aspects of your own way of life do you look at differently since coming here? How important is it to you to preserve your own cultural heritage here?

5. ***Food and Culture***

Everywhere in the world, food in its specific varieties has tremendous emotional and cultural significance. In some cultures, rice rather than beef is "real food for real people," while in others sweet potatoes constitute 90 percent of the diet. To reject food offered by others often means rejection of a social relationship. Ask students to write a short paper discussing the cultural meanings of food and its presentation in their families or communities (for example, Christmas, Thanksgiving, family reunions, local festivals centered on food). Would a vegetarian visitor from another country experience difficulties in their family or community? Why or why not?

6. ***Subcultures***

Give students five minutes to make a list of as many subcultures as they can think of existing in their hometowns. Have them share and compare their lists orally, noting the degree of interaction and awareness they have with each subculture. You might follow up on this discussion by having them write about their personal experience with a subculture as an insider or outsider.

7. ***Lesson Plan*** (for future teachers)

An option for students in an education curriculum is to choose a chapter from a textbook that they might find themselves using in their first job and to develop a corresponding lesson plan. For example, the book might be a high school social studies text that mentions a variety of ethnic groups (European Americans, African Americans, Native Americans, Latinos, Southeast Asian refugees, etc.), depending on the topic. Students can develop a short lesson plan showing how they will incorporate information on the groups into the class they will be teaching. Have them discuss how they will deal with possible ethnocentrism among their students.

8. ***Book Review***

Have students choose from a list of readable accounts of anthropological fieldwork and prepare brief book reviews focusing on key areas such as culture shock, problems in obtaining information, daily life in the field, ethical dilemmas, and so on. On the day the reviews are due, have several volunteers who read different books give their reviews orally. Then ask students to consider how the experiences of the anthropologists differed and how what they learned from other cultures changed their lives. Your book list might include Elizabeth Warnock Fernea's *Guests of the Sheikh* (Doubleday, 1989), Dennis Werner's *Amazon Journey* (Prentice Hall, 1990), Barbara Gallatin Anderson's *First Fieldwork* (Waveland Press, 1989), Elizabeth Marshall Thomas's *The Harmless People* (Knopf, 1965), Colin Turnbull's *The Forest People* (Simon and Schuster, 1961), Eleanor Smith Bowen's *Return to Laughter* (Doubleday, 1964), Jean Briggs's *Never in Anger* (Harvard University Press, 1970), William Mitchell's *The Bamboo Fire* (Waveland Press, 1987), Martha Ward's *Nest in the Wind* (Waveland Press, 1989), Beverly Newbold Chinas's *La Zandunga* (Waveland Press, 1993), William E. Wormsley's *The White Man Will Eat You* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1993); Kenneth Good's *Into the Heart* (Simon and Schuster, 1991), Nita Kumar's *Friends, Brothers, Informants* (University of California, 1992), Paul Rabinow's *Reflections on Fieldwork in Morocco* (University of California Press, 1977) and others.

9. ***Ethnography***

To give students a sense of the keen observation skills needed to do ethnography, give them (or have them select) a highly descriptive three-page segment of an ethnography and ask them to rewrite it, substituting the details of their own community for those of the culture described in the book.

10. ***Ethnocentrism***

During the week students are reading Chapter 2, ask students to take note of ethnocentric comments and behaviors that they encounter in day-to-day life-in the media and in their own social arenas. Compile a collective list of their findings and build a class discussion around it.

11. ***The Human Relations Area Files***

Introduce students to the HRAF Archives in your library (if available) or on the HRAF website www.yale.edu/hraf/.

12. ***Infotrac Exercises***

Instructors have an option to include the Infotrac website as part of their course at <http://infotrac.thomsonlearning.com/>. This website provides access to thousands of articles from scholarly and popular journals, classified by discipline and specialty. For more information, see your Thomson campus representative.

- a) Write a paper on the diffusion of cultural ideas and practices (search using the keywords “culture diffusion”). See for example the article on the Shuar, “Radios in the Rainforest.” How did modern mass media make a difference in their lives?
- b) Searching under “symbols” as a keyword, write a paper on the controversy in France over the government ban on religious symbolism in schools.
- c) Looking under “gender and culture” and comparing two or more different cultures, write a short essay illustrating how ideas about masculinity and femininity are culturally defined.

Other Resources

The Anthropology Resource Center: The Anthropology Resource Center is a dynamic, subfield-specific website that provides a wealth of materials for both students and instructors to reinforce key concepts in anthropology. All of the resources and activities encourage students to apply anthropology beyond the textbook and classroom. The Anthropology Resource Center can be reached through the weblink <http://thomsonedu.com/>. After selecting the discipline of “Anthropology” under “Humanities and Social Sciences,” go directly to the Anthropology Resource Center for a wide range of resources that bring anthropology to life through pictures, interviews, news items, interactive displays, maps, and more. (*This site is passcode-protected for both instructors and students.*) Included are:

A. Student Resources

Interactive Anthropology (Cultural Anthropology)

This animated link allows students to explore the cultural context and significance of such things as cross-cultural gestures, expressions, and symbols. Encourage students to explore the interactive scenarios and test their “cultural IQs”!

Map Exercises (Cultural Anthropology)

Map Exercises provides an interactive forum in which students can explore global concerns comparatively. The various maps allow students a chance to explore questions related to the events that most impact our world today, such as environmental change, global literacy, income disparity, and AIDS. A series of questions about the map is part of the presentation and can be used to test comprehension or to generate classroom discussion.

You might suggest that students see the Map Exercise “Global Population and Life Expectancy” to see a graphic illustration of cultural diversity and biocultural connections.

Video Exercises (Cultural Anthropology)

Short video clips provide a very direct link for students to view a range of cultures and cultural behaviors. A series of questions about the film follow each clip and can be used to test student comprehension or to generate classroom discussion.

“Building a Home, Building Relationships” may be helpful for students in this chapter as they are introduced to cultural diversity and adaptation.

Meet the Scientists (Cultural Anthropology)

What is it like to do field research? How did you get interested in this research? What benefits does this field research bring to the people studied? These are the kinds of questions that students get to explore in the “Meet the Scientists” series. Each of the interviews personalizes the work of the scientist and challenges students to think critically about the information they are learning. This includes a written interview and also a series of still photographs that illustrate fieldwork conditions. This helps students understand the broad significance of research in our world today. A series of questions follow the interview segment and can be used to test student comprehension or to generate classroom discussion.

Students may find the interactive interview with Dr. Barbara Aswad, “Immigrant Muslim Arab Women,” an interesting supplement to lectures on this chapter.

Researching Anthropology

Help students develop solid research skills using the internet with the Researching Anthropology website “Guide to Using the Internet.” It includes a list of frequently asked questions regarding web research and provides various suggestions and links to helpful research sites and information related to the study of Cultural Anthropology.

Breaking News in Anthropology

Using an extensive range of news sources, “Breaking News in Anthropology” includes links to current events in the news that are related to anthropology. Two links,

“Anthropology in the News” and “Anthropology in the *New York Times*,” inform and educate students about the latest anthropology-related news and also introduce them to the wide range of topics and concerns that are part of our discipline. “Breaking News” is *continually updated*.

Exploring Further

Anthropology relates to our world in powerful ways. Cultural diversity, adaptation, and culture change are concepts fundamental to human survival. Using the *Earthwatch Journal* and other essays included in “Exploring Further,” students can experience the significance of anthropology in our world by reading about controversial challenges that face scientist and citizen alike. *Earthwatch Journal* explores a range of subjects focused on sustainability and the positive application of science in our world today, while additional essays present challenges that require an anthropological perspective.

The link to “Ethnicity Head Hunters” provides students with an example of the complexity that adheres to “ethnicity” today.

The Anthropology Resource Center will be updated throughout the year. Instructors and students should periodically review this valuable online resource for new additions in each of the areas highlighted above.

B. Instructor Resources

The Anthropology Resource Center

In addition to the many resources available at the Anthropology Resource Center (ARC) for students, you should also visit the link “Instructor Resources” on ARC to see the many materials in the “Instructor Resource Center” that can help you develop and illustrate lectures and PowerPoint presentations and provide bibliographic depth and additional case study resources. *(This site is passcode-protected for both instructors and students.)*

Image Bank (Cultural Anthropology)

The Image Bank is a dynamic and growing collection of digital images for use in lectures, PowerPoint presentations, and exercises in visual anthropology. Images are categorized by topic and course with a short description.

The Image Bank includes digital pictures from each of the subfields. As part of Chapter 2, instructors might use a series of images from “The Concept of Culture” and/or “Culture Change/Continuity” as a way of illustrating class material.

Sample Syllabus

Visit this link to see a sample syllabus for Cultural Anthropology. The syllabus will give you tips and ideas on how to set up a course outline and distribute readings and activities throughout a semester using the text, *Cultural Anthropology*, and the resources provided by Thomson Wadsworth.

Instructor Book Companion Site

Find the Instructor Companion site for the Wadsworth text that you are using. Many sites offer instant instructor access to Instructor's Manuals, PowerPoint Lecture Slides, Opposing Viewpoints, NewsEdge, and more.

Service Direct

For exam copies of any of the Thomson Wadsworth materials, visit this link.

First Day of Class

For many instructors and students, the first day of class and new texts can represent a series of new technological challenges! This link provides tips and information to introduce instructors to the materials that they will be using as part of the Thomson Wadsworth text and website. In addition, there are suggestions about how to best introduce the materials to your students.

JoinIn on Turning Point

With just a click on a hand-held device, your students can respond to multiple-choice questions, short polls, interactive exercises, and peer review questions. You can take attendance, check student comprehension of difficult concepts, collect student demographics to better assess student needs, and even administer quizzes without collecting papers or grading. See JoinIn on Turning Point for more information or your Thomson Wadsworth campus representative.

Multi Media Manager

This is a new CD-ROM available to instructors that contains digital media and Microsoft PowerPoint presentations for all of Wadsworth's 2008 introductory anthropology texts, placing images, lectures and video clips at your fingertips. In the PowerPoint slides and other graphics, you can add your own lecture notes and images to create a customized lecture presentation.

Wadsworth Case Studies

The Wadsworth Case Studies series is a collection of outstanding ethnographies on a wide range of topics and geographical areas. Many of these are considered to be classics in the field of anthropology. Students and instructors are encouraged to review the case studies currently available as sources of additional required and supplemental material. See the website at <http://thomsonedu.com/>. After selecting the discipline of "Anthropology" under "Humanities and Social Sciences," go to "Select a Course" and choose the weblink to "Anthropology and Archaeology Case Studies."

Sample Case Studies for Chapter 2

Barker, Holly M. 2004. *Bravo for the Marshallese: Regaining Control in a Post-Nuclear, Post-Colonial World*.

Chavez, Leo R. 1998. *Shadowed Lives: Undocumented Immigrants in American Society*.

Igoe, Jim. 2004. *Conservation and Globalization: A Study of National Parks and Indigenous Communities from East Africa to South Dakota*.

Grobsmith, Elizabeth. 1981. *Lakota of the Rosebud: A Contemporary Adaptation*.

Films

If not used with Chapter 1, "First Contact" (1983, 54 min.), recounting the initial encounter between indigenous people of Papua New Guinea and gold prospectors from Australia, should fuel a healthy discussion on ethnocentrism and cultural imperialism.

"Amazon Journal" (1995, 58 min.) records cultural confrontations in Amazonia, including a useful consideration of the "Noble Savage" phenomenon and the ill effects of romanticized ideas about tropical rain forest natives.

"Amish Riddle" (1992, 50 min.) supplements this chapter's discussion of subcultures and challenges simplistic romanticized views of the Amish.

"A World of Differences: Understanding Cross-cultural Communication" (1997, 35 min.) highlights the potentials for misunderstanding when different cultures interact—touching on food, gestures, idioms, ritual and courtesy, touch and personal space, emotion, parents and children, courtship and marriage.

"Fieldwork" (1990, *Strangers Abroad series*, 52 min.) features Walter Baldwin Spencer's research among Australian Aborigines in the 1890s, which challenged the notion that their culture was primitive and showed it to be extremely complex and subtle.

A classic film offering insights into ethnographic fieldwork is "A Man Called Bee: Studying the Yanamamo" (1974, 40 min.) about Napoleon Chagnon.

Additional Readings

Useful introductory essays about the nature of culture are James Peacock's *The Anthropological Lens: Harsh Light, Soft Focus* (Cambridge University, 1986) and Richard Barrett's *Culture and Conduct* (Wadsworth, 1991). For an introduction to the practice of ethnography see George Marcus' *Ethnography through Thick and Thin* (Princeton University Press, 1998), M. H. Agar's *The Professional Stranger: An Informal Introduction to Ethnography* (Academic Press, 1980) or Philip de Vita's *The Naked Anthropologist: Tales from around the World* (Wadsworth, 1992). David Fetterman's *Ethnography Step by Step* (Sage Publications 1998) is a succinct readable primer covering the nature of fieldwork, theory application, research equipment (including various Internet tools), data analysis, writing and ethics. See also Russell Bernard's edited volume *Handbook of Methods in Cultural Anthropology* (AltaMira Press, 1998), divided into four parts: perspectives, acquiring information, interpreting information, and applying and presenting information. For a comprehensive and readable survey of the history of theory in anthropology, see *Anthropological Theory: An Introductory History*, by R. Jon McGee and Richard L. Warms (Mayfield Publishing, 2007), which offers an anthology of classic readings, accompanied by in-depth commentary. Marvin Harris' *Theories of Culture in Postmodern Times* (AltaMira Press, 1999) is a set of essays dealing with conceptualizing culture, biology and culture, explanatory principles and macroevolution. See also Jerry D. Moore's *Visions of Culture: An Introduction to Anthropological Theories and Theorists* (AltaMira Press, 1997).

Complementary Perspectives

Like many writers of introductory textbooks, Haviland et al. does not get into the sometimes confusing debate about postmodernism in cultural anthropology. One reason is that few theorists agree on what postmodernism really is. Some basic sources on this no longer recent trend in contemporary ethnology are George Marcus and Michael Fischer, *Anthropology as Cultural Critique: An Experimental Moment in the Human Sciences* (University of Chicago Press, 1986); James Clifford and George Marcus, eds., *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* (University of California Press, 1986); James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art* (Harvard University Press, 1988); Renato Rosaldo, *Culture and Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis* (Beacon Press, 1989); and Margery Wolf, *A Thrice-Told Tale: Feminism, Postmodernism, and Ethnographic Responsibility* (Stanford University Press, 1992). A collection of readings about the dilemmas of current cultural

anthropology is Robert Borofsky's *Assessing Cultural Anthropology* (McGraw Hill, 1994). Particularly useful in this volume are the short biographies and interviews with leading anthropologists representing a variety of perspectives.