Introduction to

Anthro-pology

CHAPTER 14
Anthropology of Food

Figure 14.1 A fruit and vegetable vendor in Saigon, Vietnam. How many of these foods do you recognize? (credit: "Vietnam Sept 2012 3432 Market, Sa Dec, Viet Nam" by Lynda/flickr, CC BY 2.0)

CHAPTER OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION The study of food has a long history in anthropology and weaves together various subfields of the discipline. Among other things, food connects to nutrition and health, rituals and behaviors regarding production and consumption, and worldwide trade networks and the related diffusion of plants, animals, and artifacts. Distinguishing between what is and what is not food is a major concern within and across most human cultures. Food varies not only from one society to another but also across genders, classes, family groups, and seasons. As both a source of sustenance for the body and a means of establishing or advertising one's social status, **food** plays a major role in personal and cultural identity. In globalized Western culture, people regularly eat foods that originated in other cultures—such as sushi, gyros, tacos, spaghetti, and crepes, to name just a few—but practices such as avoiding certain foods (food prohibitions) and even eating one's

family members or enemies (forms of cannibalism) are cross-cultural food traditions that are likely less familiar.

Culturally appropriate preparation and consumption of food requires a vast array of knowledge, artifacts, and rituals. In Figure 14.2, an Indigenous woman in Mexico is making tortillas, using a grinder and grindstone to transform corn into flour, which she then mixes with water to create a batter. Preparing flour in this traditional manner typically requires the cook to navigate various stages of food preparation, including choosing the best dried grains, nuts, spices, or herbs; assessing when a flour has reached the desired consistency; and physically being able to use the grindstone. The food utensils that the woman is using are not only tools but also symbols associated with the women who own and use them. Within families, these utensils may be passed down through generations. In some cultures, it is common for Indigenous women to inherit the grindstones of their mothers and grandmothers.

FIGURE 14.2 A woman in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, makes tortillas. In the foreground are the *metate* (the large, flat stone) and the *mano* (the smaller, oblong stone) she used to grind dried corn into flour to create the batter for this traditional food. (credit: "Grinding Corn for Tortillas" by Terri Bateman/flickr, CC BY 2.0)

14.1 Food as a Material Artifact

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Describe archaeological evidence of food.
- Identify some of the earliest stone tools associated with food preparation.
- Explain ways that archaeologists identify early human foods.
- Explain the relationship between archaeology and foodways research.
- Discuss the relationship between food and cultural heritage.

Food Artifacts

The study of early human diets is important in understanding the evolution of the human species. The size and shape of our skulls and teeth are directly linked with culture and diet. As foods became softer over time (primarily due to the use of fire and cooking) and meat became more common in the human diet, the size of human dentition decreased. Along with this reduction in the size of teeth, cooked foods, especially meats, made increased calories and nutrition available and also prompted brain growth. The most direct evidence of meat eating among early humans is butcher marks found on bone, estimated to be from as early as 3.4–2.6 million years ago (Wild 2019; Pobiner 2013). The earliest evidence of humans cooking a carbohydrate source is charred tubers recently identified by archaeologist Cynthia Larbey (Wild 2019) at Blombos Cave, in the Klasies River site in South Africa, and dated to 120,000 BP. Excavations at the archaeological site Shubayqa 1 in Jordan have uncovered the earliest evidence of charred breadcrumbs, indicating that humans were baking

bread as early as 14,500 BP (Richter and Arranz-Otaegui 2018). From meat to potatoes to bread, humans and their diets have adapted to changing ways of life.

In the archaeological record, food evidence takes many forms. It may be a hearth or pottery container with food or drink residue, butchered animal bones, coprolites (fossilized fecal material), tools used in food processing, baskets or pottery used for storing food, or even garbage dumps or **shell middens** (large collections of discarded shells.) In historical sites, there may even be preserved food remains, such as corn kernels or alcoholic beverages still enclosed in containers. Studying food helps anthropologists better understand many aspects of human existence and culture, including the rhythms and activities of daily life, food exchange and preparation, feasting, ritual activities, population density, length of settlement at a site, division of labor, seasonal activities, diet and health, cultural traditions and preferences, and even social status within a group. Food is connected with almost all human activities.

Early Archaeological Sites and Food Utensils

By the emergence of *Homo habilis* around 2.6 million years ago, early human settlements were typically littered with the debris of stone tools that were most likely used in food production. There is evidence of tools that were used for hunting, skinning, crushing, slicing, and grinding. These earliest tools were chipped and flaked from pieces of stone to create objects that had both an edge and a point. As tools evolved and became more specialized, they became increasingly focused on specific aspects of food procurement and production.

Unfortunately, relatively little study has been done on tool production and its relationship to food preparation. Historically, utensils and food preparation have received little attention in scholarly research, likely because daily food preparation is part of domestic work, frequently associated with women, and often occurring as a private household activity. As archaeologists have somewhat recently turned their attention to the evolution of food production tools, they have begun to note interesting regional cultural patterns. Recent studies of grinding tools in the Near East, where cereal production first emerged, have called attention to "untapped potential in the understanding of food production" (Ebeling and Rowan 2004, 115).

Archaeologist Jennie Ebeling and her colleague Yorke Rowan have studied the evolution of grinding stones in the Near East from the Upper Paleolithic period (38,000–8000 BCE) into the Iron Age (1200–1000 BCE). Using a diverse collection of evidence, including excavated artifacts and archaeological sites, tomb paintings, written sources, and even ethnographic studies, they have formed a better understanding of the role of stone grinding tools in ancient Near Eastern food production. The earliest stone grinding tools were of two basic types: an earlier form consisting of mortars, deep concave bowl-like surfaces, paired with pestles, small oblong-shaped hand grinders (see Figure 14.3); and a later form that featured hand stones and grinding slabs (see Figure 14.4). Using **residue studies**, the chemical analysis of small amounts of materials left intact on surfaces, Ebeling and Rowan'determined that both types of grinding tools were used for not only nuts and cereals but also meat, bark, minerals, salt, and herbs. In some cases, they have been able to determine the origins of the grinding materials, which include locally sourced stone and much-sought-after **basalt**, a rugged igneous rock that resists the type of degradation that would leave small flakes of debris in the meal.

Ebeling and Rowan's study of grinding tools revealed a great deal about life in the Near East. By the emergence of the Neolithic Period around 10,000 BCE, some stone tools were beginning to be decorated with distinct geometric patterns and fashioned with pedestaled feet, developments in art and adornment that likely indicate emerging differences in social status between families. Dental and skeletal studies shed further light on the use of these tools. Dental decay accelerated during the Neolithic Period, suggesting increased consumption of carbohydrates such as cereal grains, which convert to sugar during the digestive process. Additionally, skeletal wear patterns (specifically compressed toes, which distort the alignment of the foot) are evident on the remains of women and young girls, most likely indicating that females were doing extensive daily work grinding cereals.

FIGURE 14.3 Mortars and pestles were some of the earliest stone grinding tools. (credit: Bugil/Wikimedia Commons, Public Domain)

Ancient Foodways and Food Reconstructions

Anthropologists are interested in **foodways**, a term used to describe a society's collection, production, and consumption of food. There is a particular interest in understanding how culinary traditions shape identity. It is not uncommon for archaeologists and cultural anthropologists to attempt to reconstruct food practices of the cultures they are studying, utilizing different types of clues. While written accounts, artwork, and visible food remnants help tell the story of a culture's foodways, anthropologists also use residue studies of traces of food and drink in pottery, baskets, and gourds and stable isotope analysis of human bones and teeth, in which they measure isotopes (radioactive elements found naturally in food) to determine the diet of an individual and the environment in which they lived. These clues to ancient foodways can reveal a great deal about daily life.

Archaeologist Lisa Duffy has studied ancient Maya cuisine using residue from pottery and grinding stones. Residues include many kinds of trace materials left behind on the artifacts, such as charred remains on the sides of a cooking pot or microscopic plant or animal remains on the surface of a vessel. So far, residues have been successfully recovered from seven ancient Maya sites across Guatemala and Belize, some dating from as early as 600 BCE. Some of the chemicals that have been identified indicate use of chili pepper, cacao, chocolate, and tobacco, among other herbs and spices. While chocolate compounds have been found on culinary artifacts from many different social strata, most other residues are specifically associated with certain social classes. Through studies such as this, foodways help scientists better understand the social differences and lifestyles of early cultures.

FIGURE 14.4 The Maya used chocolate as an important ingredient in their diets and grew cacao as a domesticated

crop. To make chocolate, seeds from cacao trees are fermented, dried, roasted, and ground into a paste. The grinding slab pictured here was traditionally used for the grinding stage in chocolate production. (credit: (left) "Making Chocolate Mayan Style Ixcacao Maya Belizean Chocolate Farm San Felipe Belize 2653" by bobistraveling/flickr, CC BY 2.0; (right) "History of Chocolate, 1150 BC to 1550 AD, Olmec & Maya" by Gary Lee Todd/flickr, CC BY 2.0)

Foodways can also be explored by reconstituting foods in order to better understand their chemical and sensual characteristics. In one experiment, physicist Seamus Blackley and his colleagues, archaeologist Serena Love and microbiologist Richard Bowman, developed a technique to extract hibernating yeast microbes left behind on porous Egyptian ceramics. These yeast microbes were dated to 4,500 years ago. The first step in their experiment was to sequence the yeast's genome (i.e., map each of its genetic markers), through which they determined that it was not genetically the same as modern yeast and that it was as old as they had originally thought. The researchers then fed the yeast einkorn flour, made from a kind of wheat that would have existed at the time the yeast was originally active. As Blackley reported, "The yeast woke up right away.... It was kind of remarkable" (Blackley, Love, and Bowman 2019). The resulting bread was fine grained and well risen, with a pungent odor of brown sugar. Using experimental techniques such as these, archaeologists are able to tap into smells, tastes, and textures that were part of ancient foodways and may no longer exist in our cuisine today.

Food as Cultural Heritage

Sometimes, anthropologists find it useful to distinguish between the terms *culture*—which, as discussed in Chapter 3, The Concept of Culture, can be defined as beliefs, behaviors, and artifacts that a group uses to adapt to its environment—and **cultural heritage**, which comprises traditions passed down for generations and used as a way of identifying a group of people. In state societies peopled by diverse cultural groups, it is common for food to be used to distinguish one group from another. "Those people" eat "those things," and "my people" eat "these things." Later in this chapter, we will examine how national identities are shaped by food, but ethnic groups also define themselves by differences in food choices and food preparation. Within American culture, there are a number of familiar connections between certain groups and certain foods: the Pacific Northwest Coast Indigenous peoples and salmon; Jewish residents of New York City and bagels; people of German ancestry in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and brats; residents of San Francisco's Chinatown and steamed pork buns—to name just a few.

While archaeologists are at work using various techniques to better understand the foodways of ancient cultures, some contemporary peoples are focused on reviving their own culinary heritages. Reviving and restoring seeds, recipes, and even early cooking techniques are part of learning more about earlier populations, diverse foodways, and traditional and perhaps once-lost flavors. For some people, this rediscovery is also a way of asserting or reclaiming their cultural identity.

Cherokee Ramps

Early studies of the foodways of the Eastern Band of Cherokee mention the prevalence of ramps, wild leeks that are similar to wild onions and grow in the Appalachian region of the United States. Ramps (*Allium tricoccum*) are eaten from the time they begin to sprout in March almost until they bloom in April or May. The bulb is eaten raw or is chopped up and fried with eggs. Some parboil the entire plant, and in recent years, ramps have been canned or deep-frozen by some Cherokee families. (White 1975, 324–325)

Used as a supplementary food by the Cherokee for generations and eventually adopted by European settlers in the Appalachians, ramps today continue to serve as a link to cultural identity. In his ethnographic research on the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Nation, anthropologist Max White (1975) explained that the Cherokee view plants as having *agency*, the ability to make choices about where to grow and whether to intervene to help people. The Cherokee cultivate relationships of respect with the native flora around them as part of an enduring relationship with their environment.

FIGURE 14.5 Ramps, wild leeks that are similar to wild onions, have long been an important part of Cherokee foodways. They are now increasingly in demand for urban cuisine as well. (credit: "Patch of Ramps" by Wendell Smith/flickr, CC BY 2.0)

Ramps, long valued as one of the first edible green plants to ripen in the spring, are prized by many people for their flavor and reported medicinal value for treating common colds, earaches, and circulatory disease (Rivers, Oliver, and Resler 2014, 7). Cherokee citizen and anthropologist Courtney Lewis (2012) has studied the recent legal and ethical issues surrounding the collection of ramps in the Qualla Boundary, U.S.-designated Cherokee land in North Carolina. Because the Great Smoky Mountains National Park (GSMNP) borders the western part of the Qualla Boundary, there had been a long-standing informal agreement allowing Cherokee citizens to collect traditional foods within the park as long as their collection did not endanger any species. Up until 2009, the relationship between the National Park Service (NPS) and the Eastern Band of Cherokee had been primarily amicable. However, in 2007, the NPS had decided to prohibit all harvesting of ramps within the GSMNP, based on an earlier study by an NPS botanist that warned that unregulated foraging could endanger some plant species. They began issuing citations in 2009, and on March 22 of that year, the NPS arrested a Cherokee family that was harvesting ramps, supposedly within park boundaries.

During the trial, there were many inconsistencies in the testimony and misunderstandings between the various parties, with the court often privileging Western scientific knowledge over Indigenous knowledge (Lewis 2012, 110). Cherokee scholars and elders pointed out that ramp production is cyclical, consisting of high production years followed by recovery cycles; that Indigenous harvesting techniques, which take just the stems and leaves instead of the roots, are different from those of non-Indigenous harvesters and allow for sustainable growth; and that many of the less productive ramp areas were not within traditional Cherokee foraging zones. Many of the zones in which ramps were deemed most threatened were outside of the traditional foraging areas and were most likely being harvested by non-Indigenous people meeting the demand for ramps in nearby upscale restaurants. In addition, given the increasing levels of air pollution and ongoing climate change, many wild plants in the Great Smoky Mountains are facing threats from sources other than local foraging. Although the trial ended with the Cherokee family charged for trespassing on federal lands, the legalities of ramp collection continue to be debated today.

While the controversies surrounding ramp collection have not completely subsided, there is increasing recognition of the importance of Indigenous foodways and cultural identity. Today, around 50 percent of U.S. national parks, including the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, allow some form of foraging within their boundaries (Linnekin 2019), regulated by all sorts of rules, guidelines, and informal agreements with local and Indigenous populations. The Eastern Band of the Cherokee Nation monitors ramps as part of its natural resource management in the Qualla Boundary and continues to negotiate for foraging rights on ancestral lands that the Cherokee deem to have belonged to them for thousands of years, now cut off by the national park. For

many Cherokee families, foraging sites and trails are family secrets that have been passed down for many generations. In 2019, the GSMNP entered into a new agreement with the Eastern Band of Cherokee to allow its citizens to gather *sochan*, a kale-like plant located within park boundaries (Chávez 2019). Today, Cherokee still gather ramps within park boundaries in designated areas, but those gathering for non-subsistence needs are required to have a gathering permit issued by the GSMNP.

There are many examples of foods and dishes that are considered important to preserving ancestral identities. In 2006, UNESCO, the educational and cultural group of the United Nations, convened a working group to establish lists of intangible cultural heritage and a register of good safeguarding practices (https://openstax.org/r/ich.unesco) as a way to recognize and preserve the cultural traditions of humanity. Several special foods and cooking traditions are included on the lists as examples of endangered cultural heritage, such as flattened sourdough bread from Malta, *oshi palav* (a pilaf made with vegetables, rice, and meat) from Tajikistan, and the cultivation of the date palm in Bahrain, Jordan, Kuwait, and other areas of the Middle East.

It is not uncommon for a family to have special recipes and meals that they serve on holiday occasions as a way of remembering their past and of passing on traditions to new generations. Does your family follow any food traditions as a way of remembering your ancestors? Take a moment to consider the different roles that food plays in your own family.

14.2 A Biocultural Approach to Food

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Identify a biocultural approach.
- Describe Three Sisters cropping as an Indigenous adaptation.
- Identify the various types of evidence that anthropologists use to reconstruct ancient foodways.
- Describe how contemporary dietary approaches connect with ancient foodways.

Food and the Biocultural Approach

Many anthropologists take a **biocultural approach** to their study of food, looking at how food plays both a cultural and a biological role in human lives. Food provides physical nourishment of our bodies and also a means of understanding who we are. How people procure and prepare foods and which foods are deemed appropriate for which occasions are important parts of cultural identity. Food is thus an area that weaves together the biological and cognitive aspects of our lives—an observation captured by the familiar phrase "you are what you eat." Although the biocultural approach continues to focus on food and identity, it also includes an emphasis on the nutritional science of food.

The biocultural approach can be applied to the study of food in many ways, from research into subsistence practices and traditional ways of raising crops to analysis of how groups assign meaning to the food of other cultures. As popular cultural artifacts, food-related knowledge and practices are shared from culture to culture as groups seek additional health benefits and food variety.

Subsistence and Biocultural Adaptation

Cereals (including corn, wheat, barley, and rice) and legumes (various types of beans) are the most common crops grown by subsistence farmers because they are versatile and economical and have a wide range of health benefits. In addition to carbohydrates, protein, vitamins, minerals, and fiber, they provide a substantial number of calories. In other words, cereals are a good investment of labor and have long-term health benefits. Indigenous peoples around the world have long been aware of the potential in these foods.

By the time Europeans arrived in the Americas, Indigenous peoples of North and Central America had been selectively breeding domesticated plants for thousands of years. Over many generations, the Indigenous peoples of the Americas had developed a detailed understanding of the health benefits and the risks associated with certain plants and the ways in which plants could be grown together to sustain higher yields. The "Three Sisters" is one traditional cropping system that grows specific plants near one another—usually

some combination of corn, beans, and squash—so that each aids and supports the others' growth. This approach of placing plants of different types together in such a way as to benefit the growth of each is known as **intercropping**. While variations on the Three Sisters are found throughout Indigenous groups in North and Central America, the Haudenosaunee's use of the practice has been particularly well studied.

The Haudenosaunee people (also known as the Iroquois or Six Nations) of what is now the northern part of New York State practiced Three Sisters cultivation with maize, beans, and pumpkins, which are a form of squash. Seeds from each of these crops were planted together in small mounds in an unplowed field. Each mound contained several maize seeds in the middle, with bean and pumpkin seeds placed around the perimeter. (Note the difference from the row-based agriculture practiced on conventional American farms today.) Each of the plants in the mound offers a benefit to the others. The vigorous pumpkin vines, with their large leaves, quickly form a canopy that shades out weeds, preserves moisture in the soil, and prevents erosion. The bean plants, with the help of bacteria, are able to fix nitrogen in the soil, making it available as a fertilizer to the plants growing around them. And the fast-growing maize plants, which require lots of nitrogen for healthy growth, provide trellises for the climbing beans (Gish Hill 2020). In a 1910 study of Haudenosaunee culture, Arthur Parker, archaeologist and Iroquois historian, noted that these crops were planted together in part because the Haudenosaunee people believed they were "guarded by three inseparable spirits and would not thrive apart" (quoted in Mt. Pleasant 2016, 88). In the Haudenosaunee belief system, these three crops were believed to have been given to the people as gifts from the deities. The physical and spiritual sustenance provided by each food reminded the people of their cultural heritage each time they were consumed (Carnegie Museum of Natural History 2018). Although these foods were foundational to their diets, the Haudenosaunee added to the diversity of their cuisine through seasonal foraging of wild plants and animals.

Jane Mt. Pleasant (2016), a horticulturist and specialist in Indigenous cropping systems, has studied the caloric yield (the total calories provided by the harvest) of crops planted using the Three Sisters technique. She has found that when planted together, the three crops yield as much as two to four times the amount of total calories and protein than they would if the plants were cultivated alone. Corn plants in particular show a significant increase in protein when combined with the other sisters (92).

FIGURE 14.6 A Three Sisters garden usually includes corn, beans, and squash planted together in a small mound. The plants nourish and protect each other as they grow. Here, gardeners display a bountiful harvest from their Three Sisters garden. (credit: "IMG_4326" by Sterling College/flickr, CC BY 2.0)

Today, sustainable farming techniques are increasingly valued by people concerned about the ecological costs of conventional farming. Sustainable farming techniques, many of them grounded in traditional practices, offer ways to produce higher food yields, reduce fertilizer costs, build healthier soils, and avoid **genetically modified plants**, which have had their DNA deliberately altered in a laboratory setting. Iowa State University currently sponsors a Three Sisters gardening project (https://openstax.org/r/threesistersproject), which works collaboratively with Native American communities to raise awareness of the techniques, nutritional benefits, and cultural values of traditional intercropping methods. The project makes a point of working with **heirloom**

seed varieties, which are seeds that are not genetically modified, are open pollinated (meaning that the seeds can be saved for generations and will continue to breed true), and have been in existence for at least 50 years. One of their goals is to return the seeds to their home communities (Gish Hill 2020). There are many benefits to using heirloom seeds, including better flavors, better adaptation to local environmental conditions, the ability to save seeds to be grown in subsequent years, and increased genetic diversity, which contributes to long-term sustainability.

Increasingly, there is increased interest in new foods and cuisine worldwide. Many of these *re*discovered foods originate in the histories of Indigenous cultures. Using oral tradition, historical documents, and even genetic analyses, both Western and non-Western peoples are increasingly seeking to revive culinary heritage:

> Many Indigenous people are now on a path of rediscovery, preservation, and reinvention of these staple foods. The Three Sisters are experiencing a culinary resurgence after decades of lost knowledge due to forced relocation, cultural oppression, and genocide. Numerous tribes have found renewed health and spiritual bonds through efforts to sustain, cultivate, and cook with the Three Sisters. (Murphy 2018)

Food, Fads, Diets, and Health

In the fifth century BCE, the Greek historian Herodotus wrote about the Macrobians, a cultural group living in what is now southern Ethiopia who were supposed to have found a mythical "fountain of youth" in which people could bathe and become young again. Herodotus had heard that the Macrobians lived to be 120 years old and consumed only boiled fish and milk. Trying to explain the myths he had heard, he surmised that diet and special waters must have been the cause of their longevity. While this was not likely the first time that someone claimed a secret elixir or remedy for physical aging and illness, it is one of the earliest recorded dietary myths. Many more would follow. In 1558, Venetian patron of the arts Alvise Cornaro authored a best seller titled *Discorsi della vita sobria*, variously translated into English as *Sure and Certain Methods of Attaining a Long and Healthful Life* and *Discourses on a Sober and Temperate Life*, among other titles. In this text, he makes the following claims about human health:

> This sobriety is reduced to two things, quality, and quantity. The first, namely quality, consists in nothing, but not eating food, or drinking wines, prejudicial to the stomach. The second, which is quantity, consists in not eating or drinking more than the stomach can easily digest; which quantity and quality every man should be a perfect judge of by the time he is forty, or fifty, or sixty; and, whoever observes these two rules, may be said to live a regular and sober life. This is of so much virtue and efficacy, that the humours of such a man's body become most homogeneous, harmonious, and perfect; and, when thus improved, are no longer liable to be corrupted or disturbed by any other disorders whatsoever. (Cornaro 1779, under "A Compendium of a Sober Life")

History offers a long line of pseudoscientists, tonic peddlers, tinkerers, and even some thoughtful people hawking medicinal potions and diets reputed to solve every imaginable health problem. Many contained ingredients that are now widely recognized as harmful. In the late 19th century, a concerned consumer could try Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup for teething children, which contained morphine and alcohol; Cocaine Toothache Drops; or a cocaine-infused wine called Vin Mariani, which was used in Europe for depression, malaria, and loss of appetite (Mitchell 2019).

New religious or philosophical movements were often associated with new diets intended to improve both physical and moral health. In the United States, the Graham diet enjoyed a period of popularity in the 19th century. The diet revolved around the consumption of *graham*, a flour made of the whole-wheat berry, including the bran covering. It was developed in the 1830s by Sylvester Graham, an evangelical minister touted by Ralph Waldo Emerson as the "prophet of bran bread" (Lobel 2012). Advertised as a remedy for sexual desire and gluttony, Graham's diet included various elements that constitute sound dietary advice even today: eat only two meals a day, and eat in moderation; use no spices, meat, alcohol, or tobacco; and consume lots of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, including *lots of graham*. This diet became wildly popular in the mid-1800s, with religious groups such as the Shakers, the Christian Scientists, and the Seventh Day Adventists supporting aspects of this diet. Today, Sylvester Graham's contribution to the American diet is still evident in the graham cracker.

When the World Health Organization (WHO) was established in 1948, it fundamentally changed the way people think about health and diet. Compiling comparative data on health and lifestyle from around the world, the WHO engendered a greater awareness of health disparities between populations and a rising interest in the link between health and lifestyle. Noting that both chronic disease rates and average life spans varied greatly among cultural and national groups, people began to make connections between diet and health. Perhaps there was something to be learned from societies in which people enjoyed longer lives and had lower rates of chronic illnesses such as heart disease and diabetes. And so began a proliferation of healthy diets. Two of the most noteworthy today are the Mediterranean diet and the paleo diet.

FIGURE 14.7 The Mediterranean diet relies on fruits, vegetables, and olive oil, with very limited amounts of meat or saturated fats. This "Mediterranean Salad" is light and nutritious. (credit: "Mediterranean Salad / Ensalada Valenciana" by Lablascovegmenu/Wikimedia Commons, CC BY 2.0)

The Mediterranean diet is based on long-held dietary traditions in countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea. It was first presented formally as a healthier way of eating by U.S. physiologist and nutritionist Ancel Keys at a WHO meeting in Geneva, Switzerland, in 1955. Keys described the particular culinary practices found in the Mediterranean region and noted their related health benefits. These practices include high consumption of fruits, vegetables, and olive oil and low consumption of meats and saturated fats. Today, the Mediterranean diet is still recommended for improving cardiovascular health and blood cholesterol levels. In a recent study of 26,000 women (Ahmad et al. 2018), data showed that the risk of developing cardiovascular disease was 25 percent lower over 12 years among those following the Mediterranean diet (The Nutrition Source 2018).

Near Eastern archaeologist Oded Borowski (2004) has researched the origins and history of the Mediterranean diet. Textual sources, especially biblical texts, and an array of archaeological artifacts from across the region describe traditional foodways in the Middle East very similar to those still prevalent today—a diet consisting primarily of cereal grains, herbs, fruit, bread, oil, and fish, with occasional meat. Archaeological artifacts also point to a great deal of dietary continuity in this part of the world. Food processing and subsistence tools such as grinding stones, churns, nets, fishhooks, and sinkers; storage jars with food residues of substances such as grain, yeast, and wine; middens with preserved food remains in ancient garbage; and animal fossils of a variety of freshwater and saltwater fish all indicate the long historical trajectory of and cultural preference for these foods. This culinary tradition continues today throughout the Mediterranean area, including the Middle East, North Africa, and southern Europe (notably Italy and Greece).

FIGURE 14.8 The paleo diet is based on contemporary ideas of how our hunting and gathering ancestors might have eaten. It includes lean meats, fruits, vegetables, and nuts. Here, the meat kabobs are lying on a bed of vegetables. (credit: "IMG_0308.JPG" by Michael Arrington/flickr, CC BY 2.0)

Another very popular diet today, based partially on cultural and nutritional studies, is the paleo diet, sometimes called the Paleolithic diet, the caveman diet, or the Stone Age diet. This diet was first developed in the 1970s by gastroenterologist Walter Voegtlin, who argued that our bodies (and our digestive systems) have been evolutionarily designed for a hunting-and-gathering way of life. The paleo diet is made up of foods that are traditionally associated with this hunting-and-gathering lifestyle—fruits, vegetables, lean meats, fish, nuts, and seeds. The Mayo Clinic, one of the best-known US medical research centers, describes the paleo diet in this way:

> The aim of a paleo diet is to return to a way of eating that's more like what early humans ate. The diet's reasoning is that the human body is genetically mismatched to the modern diet that emerged with farming practices—an idea known as the discordance hypothesis. (Mayo Clinic Staff 2020, under "Purpose")

Biological anthropologists have done significant research on the foodways of Paleolithic-era people across different geographical areas. A great deal can be determined about what these early people likely ate using various means. Among these means are zooarchaeology (the study of the fossilized remains of animals), human anatomy and physiological studies, ethnographic studies of contemporary hunters and gatherers, and analysis of artifacts, coprolites (fossilized feces), and human skeletal and dental remains. Although there seems to have been a great deal of difference in the specific types of vegetables, fruits, meats, and fish that were eaten in various cultures, in general, Paleolithic diets and lifestyles were marked by low levels of fat consumption; high levels of food diversity, including some raw foods; and high levels of physical activity. Not all the paleo diets in circulation today follow these same guidelines. While anthropological research indicates that the actual Paleolithic diet likely consisted of 65 percent plant-based foods and 35 percent animal-based foods, many contemporary paleo recipes and prescriptions do not follow this formula strictly (Chang and Nowell 2016). In their research on the paleo diet, biological anthropologist Melanie Chang and Paleolithic archaeologist April Nowell encourage anthropologists to become more involved in current conversations about Paleolithic lifestyles and what they might suggest about a healthy human diet. There is, perhaps, still more we can learn about the *real* paleo diet.

Regardless of our contemporary diet practices, we can learn a lot from our ancestors. Their foodways, lifestyles, and traditional knowledge offer windows into both the evolution of our bodies and ways of eating that promote health and longevity. The information offered by anthropology's study of different cultures and historical periods can supplement our own knowledge base as we seek ways to improve our lives today.

PROFILES IN ANTHROPOLOGY

George Armelagos
1936-2014

Personal History: Born in Detroit, Michigan, George Armelagos (https://openstax.org/r/armelagos-george) earned his BA in anthropology from the University of Michigan and his MA and PhD from the University of Colorado Boulder. During his career, he taught at the University of Utah, the University of Massachusetts, the University of Florida, and finally at Emory University, where he was a distinguished professor of anthropology.

Area of Anthropology: Armelagos took a biocultural approach to understanding ancient human diseases, examining skeletal remains to reconstruct how human behavior intersected with disease and nutrition in early populations. His areas of focus were wide ranging and included nutritional anthropology, disease in human evolution, race and racism, skeletal biology, and medical anthropology. He was a pioneer of paleopathology, the study of ancient human disease. His research also extended into contemporary foodways and nutrition. His book *Consuming Passions: The Anthropology of Eating* (1980), which he coauthored with Peter Farb, was one of the first anthropology texts devoted wholly to the study of food. Armelagos also had an abiding interest in cooking and was a master chef who loved entertaining his friends.

Accomplishments in the Field and Importance of His Work: Armelagos's contributions to anthropology bridge the subfields of biological, archaeological, and cultural anthropology. He was also an accomplished professor who taught and mentored students throughout his career and even after retirement. He received numerous awards for research and service, including the Viking Fund Medal for distinguished research in physical anthropology, awarded by the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research in 2005. In 2008, he was awarded the Franz Boas Award for Exemplary Service to Anthropology by the American Anthropological Association. This annual award recognizes extraordinary achievements that have served the anthropological profession and the community beyond by applying anthropological knowledge to improve lives. In 2009, Armelagos was awarded the Charles R. Darwin Lifetime Achievement Award in the subfield of biological anthropology. His research and mentorship advanced the biological and cultural study of our species.

14.3 Food and Cultural Identity

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Describe the relationship between food and cultural identity.
- Contrast food prescriptions with food proscriptions.
- Illustrate the connection between food and gender.

Food and Cultural Identity

Food travels across cultures perhaps more often and with more ease than any other tradition. Sometimes food carries with it related culinary practices (such as the use of chopsticks), and sometimes foods mix with existing culinary traditions to form new syncretic cuisines (such as Tex-Mex food, which evolved from a combination of Mexican and US Southwest food traditions). Like culture itself, foods are shared within and move between communities, adapting to changing circumstances and settings. Although it is adaptable, food is also tightly linked to people's **cultural identities**, or the ways they define and distinguish themselves from other groups of people. As part of these cultural identities, the term **cuisine** is used to refer to specific cultural traditions of cooking, preparing, and consuming food. While urban areas tend to shift and adapt cuisine more frequently than rural areas, those aspects of cuisine most tightly linked to identity tend to change slowly in all settings.

FIGURE 14.9 Japanese short-grain rice plays an important role in Japanese identity. Here, short-grain rice is served with a beef curry. (credit: Ocdp/Wikimedia Commons, Public Domain)

In her research on Japanese food and identity, cultural anthropologist, and Japanese scholar Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney (1993, 1995) explores the sociocultural construction of rice as a dominant metaphor for the Japanese people. Using evidence from official decrees, taxation documents, myths, rituals, woodblock prints, and poetry, Ohnuki-Tierney traces the long history of rice cultivation in Japan. Introduced from China, rice agriculture began during the Yamato period (250–710 CE). While the Chinese preferred long-grain rice, the Japanese cultivated short-grain rice, which they considered the only pure form of rice. During this period, a series of myths connecting short-grain rice to Japanese deities emerged in folktales and historical documents—evidence of Japanese efforts to distinguish themselves from the Chinese, who also relied on rice as an important source of calories. Over the years, rice developed into a staple crop that Japanese landowners used as a form of tax payment, indicating strong connections between Japanese land, Japanese short-grain rice, and the Japanese landowning elite. By the early modern period (1603–1868), as Japan became increasingly urban and eventually industrialized, agricultural life declined. People moved off the land and into cities, and rice began to take on new meanings. Symptomatic of a cultural identity strongly rooted in national history, rice became an increasingly sacred symbol of Japanese identity—a cultural memory with a long history that consistently tied being Japanese to eating domestic Japanese rice. As Japan opened to interactions with Western nations, the Japanese continued to use rice as a metaphor for national identity: while the Japanese referred to themselves as "rice-eaters," they referred to Western peoples as "meat-eaters."

For years, Japan has had a ban on importing any foreign-grown rice, even California export rice, which is primarily the Japanese short-grain variety and available at a significantly lower price. In 1993, Japan suffered a growing season that was colder and wetter than normal and had a low-producing rice harvest. US rice exporters were able to negotiate a trade deal allowing some limited rice exports to Japan. Yet most of this rice remained in warehouses, untouched. Japanese people complained that it was full of impurities and did not taste good. Today, on average, Japanese people consume only about 160 grams of rice daily, half of what they consumed 40 years ago (Coleman 2017). Yet their cultural and symbolic connection with domestic Japanese rice remains strong. Japanese short-grain rice is still referred to as *shushoku*, "the main dish" (Ohnuki-Tierney 1993, 16)—the symbolic centerpiece, even though it is now more frequently a small side dish in a more diverse cuisine. Ohnuki-Tierney notes that rice plays a particularly important role in the Japanese sense of community:

> Not only during ritual occasions, but also in the day-to-day lives of the Japanese, rice and rice products play a crucial role in commensal activities. Cooked white rice is offered daily to the family ancestral alcove. Also, rice is the only food shared at meals, served by the female head of the household, while other dishes are placed in individual containers. Rice stands for "we," i.e., whatever social group one belongs to, as in a common expression, "to eat from the same rice-cooking pan," which connotes a strong sense of fellowship arising from sharing meals. (1995, 229)

Although the meaning of rice has shifted during different historical periods—from a comparison between short-grain Japanese and long-grain Chinese rice to a way to distinguish rice-eating Japanese from meat-eating Westerners, then to a measure of the quality of what is grown in Japanese versus less desirable imported rice—the Japanese continue to hold a cultural identity closely connected with rice. Being Japanese means eating Japanese rice still today.

The relationship between food and cultural identity is readily apparent in Western societies. Most grocery stores have aisles containing goods labeled as "international foods" or "ethnic foods," and large urban areas often include neighborhoods featuring a conglomeration of restaurants serving diverse cuisines. In Washington, DC, the neighborhood of Adams Morgan is famous for its ethnic restaurants. Walking down the street, one might smell the mouthwatering aroma of *injera*, a sour, fermented flatbread from Ethiopia, or *bún bò hu?*, spicy lemongrass beef soup from Vietnam. Think about your own town and nearby urban areas. Where do you go to try new foods and dishes from other cultures?

Food Prescriptions and Proscriptions

As with all cultural institutions, there are various rules and customs surrounding food and eating. Many of these can be classified as either **food prescriptions**, foods that one should eat and are considered culturally appropriate, or **food proscriptions**, foods that are prohibited and not considered proper. These food regulations are social norms that connect production and consumption with the maintenance of cultural identity through food.

In the previous section, you read about the importance of Japanese short-grain rice as a symbol of Japanese identity. For many Japanese people, short-grain rice is a food prescription, something that they feel they should eat. Food prescriptions are common across cultures and nation-states, especially in regard to special holidays. There are many examples: turkey on Thanksgiving in the United States, corned beef on St. Patrick's Day in Ireland, special breads, and candy figurines on Día de los Muertos in Mexico, saffron bread and ginger biscuits on St. Lucia Day in Sweden, or mutton curry and rice on Eid al-Fitr in Muslim countries. Food prescriptions are also common in the celebration of commemorative events, such as the cakes eaten at birthday parties and weddings, or the enchiladas and tamales prepared for a *quinceañera* celebrating a young Latin American woman's 15th birthday. Most of these occasions involve **feasts**, which are elaborate meals shared among a large group of people and featuring symbolically meaningful foods.

One interesting example is the food eaten to mark the Dragon Boat Festival (Dragon Boat Festival, also called Duanwu), held in China on the fifth day of the fifth month of the Chinese lunar year. There are various origin stories for the Dragon Boat Festival. In one of them, the festival commemorates a beloved Chinese poet and government minister named Qu Yuan (ca. 340–206 BCE), who fell out of imperial favor and died by suicide, drowning himself. According to the story, people threw sticky rice dumplings into the river where he had drowned himself in order to distract the fish so that they could retrieve his body and give him a proper burial. The most important Dragon Boat food is *zongzi*, a sticky rice dumpling with different fillings, but the feast also traditionally includes eel, sticky rice cakes, boiled eggs, *jiandui* (a wheat ball covered in sesame seeds), pancakes with fillings, and wine.

FIGURE 14.10 *Zongzi*, a sticky rice dumpling, wrapped in bamboo leaves, prepared for the Dragon Boat Festival. Festival foods are typically associated with specific ritual events. (credit: "Dragon Boat Festival Zongzi" by Evan Wood/flickr, CC BY 2.0)

Food proscriptions, also called food taboos, are also common across cultures and contribute to establishing and maintaining a group's identity. Often, these rules and regulations about what not to eat originate in religious beliefs. Two examples are the vegetarianism practiced by many Hindus, which is grounded in the spiritual principle of *ahimsa* (nonviolence in relation to all living things), and *kashrut*, a Jewish principle that forbids mixing meat and dairy foods or eating pork or shellfish. Sometimes food proscriptions are active for limited periods of time. For many Christians, especially Catholics, the 40 days of Lent, a period of religious reflection commemorating the 40 days Jesus spent fasting in the desert, are a time when people give up certain foods or drinks to make a symbolic sacrifice. For many Catholics, this means fasting (withholding a measure of food) throughout the period and/or totally abstaining from meat on the special days of Ash Wednesday and Good Friday:

> For members of the Latin Catholic Church, the norms on fasting are obligatory from age 18 until age 59. When fasting, a person is permitted to eat one full meal, as well as two smaller meals that together are not equal to a full meal. The norms concerning abstinence from meat are binding upon members of the Latin Catholic Church from age 14 onwards. (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops n.d.)

Muslims observe Ramadan, a month-long commemoration of the prophet Muhammad receiving the revelations of the Quran, by fasting every day from sunup to sundown. The Islamic fast entails a prohibition on food and drink, including water. Every evening after sundown, Muslims eat a large meal that include fruits, vegetables, and dates to rehydrate for the next day's fast.

Some food prohibitions are customary and tied more to ancient cultural traditions than religion. Many food prohibitions pertain to meat. Among several East African groups, there is a prohibition against eating fish of any kind. This is called the *Cushitic fish taboo* because the prohibitions are found among many, but not all, cultural groups whose languages are part of the Cushite family, such as the Somali, Masaai, and Bantu peoples. Horsemeat was historically consumed infrequently in the United States until it was outlawed in 2005, primarily because of toxins in the meat related to the butchering process. Even before then, horsemeat in mainstream US society was a food prohibition. However, it is consumed throughout Europe, where there are butchers solely devoted to handling horsemeat.

FIGURE 14.11 A horse butcher shop in Italy. In many European countries, horsemeat is processed separately from other meats and sold at specialized butcher shops. (credit: Schellack at English Wikipedia/Wikimedia Commons, CC BY 3.0)

An interesting case of food rules and regulations across cultures is **cannibalism**, the act of eating an individual of one's own species. Although we do not usually think of human flesh as a menu item, in some cultures it is considered a kind of food, typically eaten as symbolic nutrition and identity. U.S. cultural and medical anthropologist Beth Conklin (1995) and Brazilian cultural anthropologist Aparecida Vilaça (2002) conducted research among the Wari' of western Amazonia in Brazil and found that prior to evangelization by Christian missionaries in the 1960s, the Wari' practiced two different types of cannibalism: *endocannibalism*, or eating members of one's own cultural group, and *exocannibalism*, or eating those who are "foreign" or outside of one's cultural group. Each form of cannibalism was associated with its own beliefs, practices, and symbolism.

The Wari' belief system is based on the principle that only the Wari' are real people. All non-Wari' others, people and animals alike, are not humans and thus can be considered meat (Vilaça 2002, 358). When speaking of the practice recognized by anthropologists as exocannibalism, the Wari' did not consider themselves to be practicing cannibalism at all; they saw non-Wari' people as not fully human and classified them as a type of prey. Endocannibalism was understood differently. Endocannibalism among the Wari' was practiced as part of the mourning process and understood as a way of honoring a Wari' person who had died. Following a death, the immediate family of the deceased arranged for non-kin and relatives by marriage to dress and prepare the body by dismembering, roasting, and eating virtually all of it. Consuming the flesh of the deceased was considered the ultimate act of respect, as the remains were not buried in the ground but in the living bodies of other Wari'. Once eaten by non-family Wari', the deceased could transform from humans into spirits and eventually return as prey animals to provide food for the living. For Conklin, this practice indicates *mutualism*, or the relationship between people and animals through the medium of food and eating:

> For Wari', ... the magic of existence lies in the commonality of human and animal identities, in the movements between the human and nonhuman worlds embodied in the recognition through cannibalism of human participation in both poles of the dynamic of eating and being eaten. (Conklin 1995, 95)

Cannibalism has been associated with many cultures, sometimes accompanying warfare or imperial

expansion, as in the case of the Aztecs (Isaac 2002), and sometimes as a means of showing respect for and establishing kinship with the deceased (see Lindenbaum 1979 for an example in Papua New Guinea). Although there have been scholarly arguments around the nature and frequency of cannibalism (Arens 1979), there is increasing evidence that this was a practiced norm in many human societies. Some religions also incorporate symbolic cannibalism as a way of identifying with the deity.

Food can be deeply symbolic and plays an important role in every culture. Whether foods are prescribed or prohibited, each culture constructs meanings around what they define as food and the emotional attachments they have to what they eat. Consider your own plate when you next sit down to eat. What meanings are attached to the different foods that you choose? What memories do different foods evoke?

Food and Gender

While food itself is a material substance, humans classify and categorize foods differently based on cultural differences and family traditions. In many cultures, food is gendered, meaning some foods or dishes are associated with one gender more than with the other. Think about your own culture. If you were cooking a meal for only women or only men, would that influence the foods you chose to prepare? Although gender-specific food choices are stereotypes of male and female dietary preferences and every person has their own individual preferences, many social institutions and entertainment venues cater to gendered diets.

- When the television show *Man v. Food*, a show devoted to "big food" and eating challenges, premiered on the Travel Channel in 2008, it had some of the highest ratings of any show on that channel. Many of the foods showcased are those stereotypically associated with men (burgers, potatoes, ribs, fried chicken), and the host participates in local food-eating competitions, highlighting regional cuisines around the United States. In this show, food functions as a sporting activity under extreme conditions.
- Food delivery business GrubHub did a study of male and female ordering preferences in 2013–2014 at some 30,000 different restaurants in more than 700 US cities to "better understand takeout and delivery" (GrubHub 2018). In their results, they noted some significant differences between men's and women's ordering habits. Pizza was the most popular item for both men and women, but among other selections, women tended to order more healthy options, such as salads, sushi, and vegetable dishes, and men ordered more meat and chicken, with the most popular choices being General Tso's chicken, chicken parmesan, and bacon.

Food historian Paul Freedman traced the emergence of gendered foods and gendered food stereotypes in the United States back to the 1870s, when "shifting social norms—like the entry of women into the workplace—gave women more opportunities to dine without men" (2019b). Freedman notes that there was a rapid development of restaurants meant to appeal to women. Many of these featured lighter fare, such as sandwiches and salads, and some were referred to as "ice cream saloons," playing on a distinction between them and the more traditional type of saloon primarily associated with men (Freedman 2015). There was also growth in the recipe industry to provide women with home cooking options that allowed for quicker meal preparation.

Gendering foods, a practice often associated with specific life stages and rituals, is found across cultures and across time. In his study of marriage customs in the chiefdom of Batié in Cameroon, social anthropologist Emile Tsékénis notes that the marriage is formalized by an exchange of gendered foods between the couple's polygamous families:

> The groom offers raw "male" products (palm oil, plantain, and raffia wine) to the co-wives of the girl's mother, while the co-wives hand over the palm oil to the girl's father, and the girl's side offers "female" products (yams, potatoes, and/or taro) to the husband's side. (2017, 134)

This exchange of gendered foods between families mirrors the marriage ceremony and symbolically binds the couple's families together.

Gendered foods are also common during puberty rituals in many cultures, especially for young women, as female puberty is marked by the beginning of menstruation, an obvious and observable bodily change. In the Kinaaldá, the Navajo puberty ceremony for young girls that takes place shortly after the first menstruation, the girl and female members of her family together cook a corn cake in a special underground oven. The corn

cake, called an *alkaan*, is understood as a re-creation of the first corn cake baked by the Navajo deity Changing Woman. After baking this first corn cake, Changing Woman offered a piece of it to the sun in gratitude for food and life. By reenacting this ritual, the young girl marks her own journey toward the creation of life, as she is now capable of becoming a mother.

FIGURE 14.12 Ashes smolder in a firepit in preparation for baking the corn cake that is used to celebrate a Navajo girl's Kinaaldá (puberty) ceremony. (credit: "Campfire 1" by Jaroslav A. Polák/flickr, Public Domain)

As we saw in Chapter 12, Gender & Sexuality, cultures may also celebrate foods that enhance sexuality. In some regions of Vietnam, there are restaurants that serve dog to male customers only, as dog meat is believed to enhance masculinity (Avieli 2011). Food contains and conveys many cultural beliefs. This can be compared to the joys attributed to chocolate in the United States, especially during the celebration of Valentine's Day. Do you have similar beliefs about food and sexuality?

14.4 The Globalization of Food

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Describe the impacts of globalization on food and food diversity.
- Define food deserts and food oases.

Globalization of Food

Most people, when they think about food, consider it a local, individual choice based on personal preferences and economic possibilities. But food is a global commodity marketed by transnational corporations, health institutes, advertising campaigns, and subtle and not-so-subtle cultural messaging through global media such as movies, television, and online video. Most often, what people choose to eat is based on underlying structures that determine availability and cost. While there are now hothouse businesses growing year-round fruits and vegetables, affordability often prohibits everyone from having access to fresh, ripe foods. Instead, mainstream grocery stores most often stock foods imported across long distances. Most fruits and vegetables sold in the grocery store were harvested unripe (and often tasteless) so that they would last the days and weeks between harvesting and purchase.

FIGURE 14.13 Pallets of fruit being loaded on deck for shipment overseas. Most commercial fruits are harvested before they are ripe so that they will not spoil before arriving at a supermarket, often far from where they were picked. (credit: Dr. Karl-Heinz Hochhaus/Wikimedia Commons, CC BY 3.0)

In her work on food and globalization, anthropologist and food studies specialist Lynne Phillips points out the "crooked pathways" (2006, 38) that food takes to become a global commodity. Increasingly affected by transnational corporations, food today is marketed for endlessly higher profits. Food no longer goes simply from producer to consumer. There are many turns along the way.

Food globalization has numerous effects on our daily lives:

- The food chains from producers to consumers are increasingly fragile as a small number of transnational corporations provide the basic foods that we eat daily. Failures in this food chain might come from contamination during production or breaks in the supply chain due to climate crises, tariffs, or trade negotiations between countries. Our dependence on global food chains makes the food supply to our communities more vulnerable to disruption and scarcity.
- Our food cultures are less diverse and tend to revolve around a limited number of mass-produced meats or grains. With the loss of diversity, there is an accompanying loss not only of food knowledge but also of nutrition.
- As foods become more globalized, we are increasingly dependent on food additives to enhance the appearance and taste of foods and to ensure their preservation during the long journey from factory farm to table. We are also increasingly exposed to steroids, antibiotics, and other medicines in the meat we eat. This exposure poses health risks to large numbers of people.
- As plants and animals are subjected to ever more sophisticated forms of genetic engineering, there is an increasing monopoly on basic food items, allowing transnational companies to affect regulatory controls on food safety. As corporate laboratories develop patented seeds (such as the Monsanto Corporation's genetically engineered corn) that are super-producers and able to withstand challenges such as harsh climate conditions and disease, growers become dependent on the seed sold by these corporations. No longer able to save seed from year to year, growers have little choice but to pay whatever price these corporations choose to charge for their genetic material.
- Factory farming of all types, but especially large-scale animal farms, are major contributors to global warming. Not only do they produce large amounts of water and air pollution and contribute to worldwide deforestation, but as more and more forest is turned into pasture, the sheer number of livestock contributes significant levels of greenhouse gases that lead to global warming. Worldwide, livestock account for around 14.5 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions (Quinton 2019).

Food has long been an international commodity, even during the 17th and 18th centuries, when traders sought spice and trade routes connecting Europe and Asia. Today, however, food has become transnational, with production sometimes spanning many different countries and fresh and processed foods moving long

distances from their original harvest or production. Because these migrating foods must be harvested early or packaged with preservatives that we may not know or even be able to pronounce, there has been a parallel development in local food movements, organic food movements, and farm-to-table establishments as people see the dangers of food globalization. In the very popular *The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals* (2006), American author and food journalist Michael Pollan advocates that people should know the identity of the foods they eat and should make every effort to eat locally sourced products. Shortly after the book's publication, chef and author Jessica Prentice coined the term **locavore** to refer to those who eat locally and know the origins of their foods. In 2007, *locavore* was chosen as the New Oxford American Dictionary word of the year.

Food Deserts and Oases

Worldwide, access to nutritious and affordable foods is growing increasingly unequal. Areas with inadequate or unreliable access to nutritious foods are sometimes called **food deserts**. Food deserts present serious challenges to health and wellness in multiple ways and have been linked to eating disorders, obesity, and malnutrition. In Western nations, food deserts frequently correspond to other areas of social inequality, such as low-income and minority communities. Reduced availability of healthy and economical food often exacerbates many of the challenges these communities face.

FIGURE 14.14 Food deserts are common in Western countries, especially in and around urban areas. This chart shows areas in the United States where significant percentages of people both have no car and no grocery store within a mile of their home, which is about a twenty minute walk for a healthy adult. (credit: United States Department of Agriculture and Centers for Disease Control/Wikimedia Commons, Public Domain)

As the world population continues to grow (currently at around 7.9 billion people (https://openstax.org/r/world-population)), climate change accelerates, and food production becomes more and more concentrated in the hands of a few corporations, access to food will become increasingly critical to our survival. The story of progress embraced by Western society tells us that globalization and agricultural developments have stabilized and secured our food chains, but anthropological studies of foragers suggest otherwise. Agricultural production is tied to access to arable land, clean water, stable climate, and a reliable workforce. Periodically, crops (and animals) fail due to disease, drought, and even disruption from warfare and extreme weather, leading to scarcity and famine in many parts of the world. In addition, as families and communities produce less and less of their own food and become more and more dependent on intermediaries to gain access to food, their vulnerabilities increase. While there are many differences between state societies and foragers, there are valuable lessons we can learn from them. Foragers, facing the same unstable conditions that we all face worldwide, have a more varied and flexible diet and are able to adjust their needs seasonally based on local availability. They eat locally, and they adjust their needs to what is available.

There are also **food oases**, areas that have high access to supermarkets and fresh foods, and these are growing in number. Some are in urban or suburban areas, and some are in rural areas where sustainable farming supports a local community or restaurant. In Harrodsburg, Kentucky, the Trustees' Table serves food from the nearby Pleasant Hill Shaker gardens. Visitors to the Shaker site, a historic cloistered religious community, learn about the Shaker seed industry, plant varieties, and sustainable gardening techniques at Shaker Farm,

then walk down to the Trustees' Table to have a farm-to-table meal. The seasonal menu features local Kentucky dishes that would have been common fare during the period of Shaker occupation (1805–1910), such as garlic potatoes, warm or cold salads, vegetable pot pies, and apple pie. By utilizing the foods raised in the nearby gardens, the Trustees' Table serves as a legacy restaurant that helps preserve and sustain Shaker research and farming on-site.

In Richmond, Virginia, an organization called Real Local RVA (https://openstax.org/r/reallocalrva) was founded in 2014 as a grassroots local food movement to support businesses and residential areas in the downtown area of the city. It expresses its core value as "collaboration over competition." The group sponsors monthly meetings, local farm tours, and community events highlighting businesses and prominent figures in the local food movement. The participants are all farmers, independent grocers, or local restaurants that source local ingredients and products as part of their mission. Besides advocating for small farms and independent businesses, Real Local RVA also sponsors workshops and education on sustainable farming, does joint marketing and "storytelling" about its partnership and the values of local food networks, and provide a recognizable brand to identify participating members for the wider urban community.

Although local food movements are increasingly popular, most still primarily operate in more affluent areas. As we develop more of these healthy initiatives, we also must expand the zones in which they operate, especially in cities, to include all of our neighbors and neighborhoods. Food and sociality go hand in hand. As Michael Pollan writes, "The shared meal elevates eating from a mechanical process of fueling the body to a ritual of family and community, from mere animal biology to an act of culture" (2008, 192).

The study of food in anthropology is important for many reasons. Food reveals cultural identities and physical vulnerabilities, and it helps build social networks and mark important life events. How often eating is prescribed, what foods are considered appropriate, who cooks, who serves whom, and what foods are most and least valued all vary across cultures. As anthropologists seek to understand human cultures, food is often a centerpiece ingredient in knowing who we are.

MINI-FIELDWORK ACTIVITY

Food Memories

Food plays an important role in long-term memory, as it is linked to smell, taste, and texture and often is a central feature of social functions, whether they be family dinners or holiday feasts. In this project, you will interview two individuals who are likely to have different food memories than you; they may be older, they may be living in a different part of the country (or world), or they may have lived part of their lives in a specific environment (rural or urban) that is different from yours. Ask each person to share with you stories about special holiday meals prepared and served as part of their family life, whether as a child or an adult. What foods do they most identify with specific holidays? How did they prepare and consume those foods? Were there specific gender roles during the preparation and holiday meals? After collecting and writing up what you have learned, what conclusions can you make about the role of food in human social and cultural life?

Key Terms

basalt an igneous rock frequently used for early grinding tools in the Near East.
biocultural approach a perspective that looks at both the cultural and biological roles that food plays in human lives.
cannibalism the act of eating an individual of one's own species.
cuisine the cultural traditions of cooking and preparing food.
cultural heritage traditions passed down through generations that serve as primary characteristics of how a group defines and identifies itself to other cultural groups.
cultural identity the ways in which people define and distinguish themselves culturally from other groups.
feasts elaborate meals of symbolically meaningful foods shared among large groups of people.
food a substance eaten for the purpose of nutrition and/or social status.
food deserts areas that lack access to nutritious and affordable foods.
food oases areas that have high access to supermarkets and fresh foods.
food prescriptions foods that one should eat and are considered culturally appropriate.
food proscriptions foods that are prohibited and are not considered proper as food; also called food taboos.
foodways the collection, production, and consumption of food; how culinary traditions shape cultural identity.
genetically modified plants plants whose DNA has been altered through human intervention.
heirloom seeds seeds that are not genetically modified, are open pollinated, and have been in existence for at least 50 years.
intercropping planting different seeds mixed together instead of in separate rows.
locavore a person who eats locally produced foods and knows their origins.
residue studies chemical analyses of small amounts of material left intact on surfaces in order to identify the substance.
shell midden a large collection of discarded shells, either food remains or waste piles from other activities.

Summary

Food is a ubiquitous artifact. Found everywhere during all periods of history, it is diverse and symbolic. The study of early human diets is important for understanding the evolution of humans, and archaeologists use various kinds of evidence to determine early foodways, from material artifacts such as food utensils to food residues and even coprolites. The study of ancient foods provides valuable information about health, economics, politics, and religion of early humans and the ways humans adapted to changing environments. Today, Indigenous groups such as the Cherokee are incorporating traditional foodways in cultural revitalization efforts, negotiating with the government to protect their ability to harvest wild foods on ancestral lands.

Many anthropologists take a biocultural approach to the study of food, examining the biological/nutritional role of food and its connection to identity. Agricultural practices such as the Three Sisters practice of the Haudenosaunee are good examples of ways in which human cultures have used their knowledge about food to develop sustainable and healthy farming techniques. Sustainable farming techniques, many of them grounded in traditional practices, typically produce higher food yields, reduce fertilizer costs, build healthier soils, and avoid genetically modified plants. There is also growing interest today in cultural foodways that may increase health and wellness, such as the Mediterranean diet, based on fruits, vegetables, and olive oil, and the paleo diet, which is based on our perspective of early human diets and includes lean meats, fruits, vegetables, and nuts.

Food plays a central role in cultural identity. Cultures practice food prescriptions, or specific foods considered critical to maintaining cultural identity, such as short-grain rice for the Japanese, and food proscriptions, which are food taboos, such as horsemeat in the United States. Feast foods are another way in which cultures use food to mark and symbolize special occasions. In short, what we eat as human societies defines who we are. Some societies, such as the Wari' in Brazil and many others, have also practiced forms of cannibalism as ways of defining kinship and humanity. Gender and religion are other areas in which food plays a major role in creating boundaries and identities.

Today, many foods are global commodities. Grocery

store foods, produced and distributed by transnational corporations, may be shipped many thousands of miles from their points of origin. Access to fresh food is a global challenge, especially in urban environments with concentrated populations. In food deserts, multiple forms of social inequality affect the health and wellness of the whole society. There are also growing numbers of food oases, where local movements offer farm-to-table meat and produce. Food plays an important role in our biological and cultural lives. Given the ongoing challenges of climate change, food insecurity is increasing worldwide as dependable food networks are shifting.

Critical Thinking Questions

1. What are the various ways in which food can be defined as an artifact?
2. What is the relationship between heritage foods and cultural identity?
3. How do archaeologists study early human diets? What evidence can they use to determine eating habits?
4. How does food serve as both physical and cultural nourishment?
5. Describe various food prescriptions and food prohibitions that are common in your own cultural practices.
6. What is the relationship between food and gender? How might food habits reinforce gender stereotypes? Give some examples from your own cultural practices.
7. How has globalization affected the cultural diversity and value of food?
8. Why should food deserts concern everyone in a society?

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CHAPTER 15
Anthropology of Media

Figure 15.1 Anas Aremeyaw Anas, an investigative journalist from Ghana, participating in the Global Conference for Media Freedom in London, 2019. He keeps his face hidden during all public appearances in order to protect himself from retaliation. (credit: Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office/flickr, CC BY 2.0)

CHAPTER OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION "I am sorry I cannot show you my face. Because if I do, the bad guys will come for me." Who is that masked man? That man is Anas Aremeyaw Anas, the famous investigative journalist from Ghana who gave a TED Talk (https://openstax.org/r/gaveaTEDTalk) about how he "names, shames, and jails" those "bad guys" (Anas 2013). Using controversial undercover methods, Anas has posed as a street hawker, a priest, a patient in a mental facility, a janitor in a brothel, and a boulder. His investigations have revealed widespread corruption in the Ghanaian judiciary, police service, electric company, Ministry of Youth and Sports, and passport office as well as a Ghanaian orphanage. He has exposed cocoa smuggling, rebel invasions, human trafficking, child slavery, torture of Africans in Thai prisons, unsanitary food production, forced prostitution,

and abuse of people with mental illness in a hospital.

Anas has become a kind of anti-corruption superhero in Ghana, combining anonymity and celebrity to force social change. While his undercover research is mostly in person, he publishes the reports of his investigations as videos, many of which are available for viewing on his website (https://openstax.org/r/anasaremeyawanas). He has become famous worldwide through the spread of these videos and the accumulation of interviews and commentary on his work that can be found on the Internet. His intriguing persona illustrates the complexities of identity in the digital era. Though many have attempted to unmask him, his "real" identity remains a mystery.

As previous chapters have demonstrated, anthropologists are keenly interested in questions of identity and social action. The holistic approach leads anthropologists to consider how certain social, cultural, economic, and political conditions give rise to public figures such as Anas. Clearly, the phenomenon of Anas cannot be fully understood without attention to the functions of media at local, national, and global levels. At the local level, investigative journalism functions as a tool of anti-corruption, while global digital media function as a tool of celebrity. Are these two functions compatible or contradictory?

A new field of media anthropology has emerged in the past few decades to address such pressing issues. This chapter explores the anthropology of mass media, including how media functions at local, national, and global levels. It also addresses how social conditions and cultural forces shape a variety of media genres, including news media, photography, radio, television, and the Internet. Just as anthropologists bring their unique approach to other fields, the distinctive methods and concepts of anthropology contribute complex, holistic insights to the study of media.

15.1 Putting the Mass into Media

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Define the basic function of media.
- Distinguish basic media from mass media.
- Describe the social phenomenon of technophilia.
- Explain why culture is important to the study of media.

FIGURE 15.2 Technophiles of the world. Modern communication technologies are widely used in most cultures of the contemporary world. (credit: top left, "Sinaw, Bedouin Woman with Mobile Phone" by Arian Zwegers/flickr, CC BY 2.0; top right, "Kiwanja_Burma_Calling_17" by Ken Banks, kiwanja.net/flickr, CC BY 2.0; bottom, "©UNICEF/ECU/2020/Arcos" by UNICEF Ecuador/flickr, CC BY 2.0)

People today live in an era of **technophilia**—that is, an age when people embrace technologies and incorporate them into every part of their lives, particularly their social lives. In contrast to the inert functionality of old-school cameras, watches, radios, and televisions, the new "smart" gadgets interact with their users, learn from them, make suggestions, and contact their friends and family members. Insofar as they facilitate users' interactions with other people and the world around them, these smart technologies become part of their users, akin to an extra organ for sensation and communication. Insofar as they communicate with users, nudging and prodding them, they become like a friend or family member themselves.

Part of what makes these smart technologies so attractive (and addictive) is that they function as means of connecting people to one another, carrying messages and data to other individuals and groups. As instruments of communication, all of these technologies are forms of **media**. At the most basic level, media are tools for storing and sharing information.

In this basic sense, media have always been essential to the development and durability of human culture. Early forms of symbolic communication, such as cave paintings and ancient writing systems, can be considered media, as they provided people with ways of fixing meaning in material objects that could be shared with people in other places and other times. The scope of these early forms of media was limited, however, by their singularity. People could visit a cave painting, but they could not send a copy of it to their friends. A scholar could inscribe a story on a cuneiform tablet, but that tablet could not be reproduced for a wider audience without the painstaking work of inscribing copies one by one. Up until 1000 CE, scholars in many parts of the world specialized in manually copying books and pamphlets, sometimes using wooden block prints carved out by hand. These methods were so expensive that only the very wealthy could afford to buy written forms of media.

All of this changed with the invention of the printing press, first in China and then in Germany (Frost 2021). Around 1000 CE, the Chinese artisan Bi Sheng created a set of blocks out of baked clay, each one manually inscribed with a Chinese character. To publish a page of text, he arranged the character blocks on an iron frame that could be pressed against an iron plate to create a print. Around 1440, the German entrepreneur Johannes Gutenberg independently invented a similar system of movable-type printing. Gutenberg also created a set of blocks, each one containing a letter, but his were made of metal. He used his invention to print calendars, pamphlets, and 180 now-famous copies of the Bible. Within decades, the printing press had spread from Germany to France, Italy, Spain, England, and the rest of western Europe.

VIDEO

To see how Gutenberg's printing press worked, watch this video of a demonstration (https://openstax.org/r/YouTubeDLctAw4JZXE) of the world's most complete working replica at Crandall Historical Printing Museum in Provo, Utah.

If manual writing systems are basic forms of media, then mechanically reproduced forms of communication are forms of **mass media**. Whereas forms of basic media operate between one sender and a small number of receivers, forms of mass media operate through a sender, a machine, and a potentially very large number of receivers. Originating in books and pamphlets produced using the movable-type printing press, the category of mass media has expanded over time with the development of new technologies, including photography, radio, television, and the Internet. Mass media are forms of communication facilitated by technology, allowing for broad distribution and reception by large numbers of people.

When considered from this angle, it may seem that technology is the most defining element of mass media. As machines, communication technologies might seem to function much the same in any context. When European printing presses were brought to Africa in the 19th century, they were used to publish newspapers that bore a family resemblance to European ones. If someone enables their mobile phone to function in another country while on vacation, they can use it to call their hotel or hail an Uber in much the same way they would use their phone at home.

Because communication technologies seem to function in uniform ways across contexts, people often assume that mass media are pretty much the same everywhere. Some provide news on current events. Some provide diversion and entertainment. Some allow users to communicate with individuals and groups. In this case, the differences one might see in mass media forms across cultures would be differences in technological sophistication or *penetration*, the word media scholars use to describe how widespread a communication technology is in a certain context.

Have you ever seen a Ghanaian video film? These are low-budget Ghanaian movies shot on video camera, usually completed within a few weeks and aimed at local audiences. They deal with social themes such as witchcraft and corruption, often combined with Christian redemption. Such video films are frequently criticized (by locals and foreigners alike) for their rudimentary editing and poor production values. When compared to Hollywood blockbuster movies, with their multimillion-dollar budgets and complex technological production processes, African video films may seem like a poor replica of the American form.

VIDEO

Watch *Darkness of Sorrow* (https://openstax.org/r/DarknessofSorrow) to see an example of a Ghanaian movie.

But that is not how West Africans view locally made video films. While many Ghanaians enjoy watching American films from time to time, the themes and issues explored in foreign films fail to resonate with their own experiences and concerns. In contrast, local video films engage with the desires and fears of Ghanaians, reinforcing forms of social identity and echoing familiar norms and values. Even as many Ghanaians criticize the rustic editing and uneven sound levels, local video films remain enormously popular among West African audiences.

Anthropologist Tejaswini Ganti (2012) conducted ethnographic research on the film industry in India. She

describes how Indian films developed from rustic, homegrown forms of local entertainment to technologically sophisticated spectacles, forming the globalized industry of Bollywood. Ganti situates this transformation in the larger economic shifts of the 1990s and the accompanying neoliberal emphasis on global trade and middle-class consumerism in India. While earlier films focus on themes involving working-class and marginalized peoples, later films more often dramatize the lives of the professional, highly educated, and affluent classes. Thus, Ganti links the themes, technologies, and economic contexts of these films.

While technology may seem to be the defining feature of mass media, it is the immersion of communication technologies in local cultures that produces the total experience of mass media. At heart, mass media are not just technologies but forms of communication—technological vehicles for conveying forms of cultural meaning from senders to receivers. The language, images, symbols, and sounds used to convey meaning are all elements of culture. The thematic content of mass media is also profoundly cultural, shaped by local contexts of production and reception. Ways of consuming and interacting with mass media are also heavily determined by local social norms.

15.2 Putting Culture into Media Studies

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Describe how an anthropologist might use participant observation to study media.
- Explain the relationship between modernity and media.
- Give an example illustrating the complex relationship between media and culture.
- Define the concept of cosmopolitanism.

In this section, the author of this chapter, Jennifer Hasty, describes her own experience using participant observation.

> *In the early 1990s, I went to the West African county of Ghana to study media and politics. I was specifically interested in the role of newspapers in the great wave of democratization across many African countries in that decade (Hasty 2005). Because I had some undergraduate training in journalism, I decided to volunteer as an intern at several newspapers and learn how news is produced in Ghana. I wound up working as a journalist for five different news organizations in the Ghanaian capital city of Accra over a period of several years. Through these experiences, I learned a great deal about how culture and history shape local news production, texts, and reception.*
>
> *When people outside of anthropology ask me about my fieldwork, I tell them (maybe too much) about working as a journalist in Ghana. They often respond with a perplexed look, saying, "Wait, I thought you said you were an anthropologist." When most people think about anthropological fieldwork, they think of quaint villages and rural locations, seemingly disconnected from the rest of the world. When they think of the topics anthropologists typically pursue, they think of religious rituals, political pageantry, complex kinship systems, and folk arts. That is, they think of the realm of "tradition."*
>
> *In fact, the contexts in which anthropologists work are not cut off from the rest of the world at all—and they never have been. People all over the world, in both rural and urban communities, are hooked up to global flows of information, images, ideas, commodities, and people. Newspapers, photography, radio, television, and the Internet are woven into daily life nearly everywhere one might go in the world.*
>
> *Recall the discussions of modernity in previous chapters. Historically speaking, modernity is the whole way of life associated with industrial and postindustrial societies—that is to say, the institutions and features of modernity emerged alongside industrialization and mass production. However, the features of modernity have spread across the globe to societies that are not primarily industrial or postindustrial. Features of modernity such as mass media, wage labor, and the nation-state shape the everyday lives of people in primarily agrarian, pastoral societies and gatherer-hunter societies. Anthropologists have abandoned the idea that some people live traditional lifestyles while others live modern ones. Rather, all people are modern in distinctive ways, shaped by local historical and cultural*

forces.

Since the early 1990s, anthropologists have been increasingly interested in the various forms of modernity that have emerged in non-European and non-American contexts. As a key tool of modernity, mass media have become the object of growing fascination in anthropology over the last three decades. My own first fieldwork was part of an early wave of media studies in anthropology, culminating in the establishment of an entire subdiscipline, media anthropology (Spitulnik 1993; Askew and Wilk 2002; Ginsburg, Abu-Lughod, and Larkin 2002).

By examining the use of media in contemporary sociocultural life, media anthropologists have learned that nearly all forms of culture are shaped by various genres of media. People take photographs and videos to commemorate cultural events and share their memories with others. They report on cultural topics in print media, radio, and television and discuss those issues on talk shows and social media. In fact, it's fair to say that mass media have become primary tools for defining, reinforcing, and reproducing local cultures. Rather than being opposed to tradition, mass media are key instruments for preserving and transmitting traditional cultures as well as modernity.

A few months ago, a Ghanaian journalist friend of mine, George Sydney Abugri, emailed me to ask if I could help him self-publish several books on Kindle Direct Publishing (KDP). Now retired, Abugri wanted to share his essays, poetry, and memoirs with Ghanaians, journalists, and scholars all over the world. In order to publish on KDP, you need a bank account from the United States or another "approved" country, and Ghana was not on that list. After a bit of textual wrangling, I was able to set up an account for him and get his books online so that he could find his global audience.

Anthropologists have a term for the kind of worldly orientation evident in Abugri's desire to speak to a global audience about global issues: ***cosmopolitanism****. Cosmopolitanism refers to a type of worldly knowledge and sophistication. Contemporary anthropologists, working in rural, village, and urban contexts, find that people in all settings have remarkable awareness of current world issues such as climate change, the Arab Spring, and the Me Too movement. One of Abugri's poems describes an incident on the German airline Lufthansa in which a White flight attendant claimed she could not understand Abugri's request for a glass of water. Cosmopolitan writers such as Abugri link their personal experiences to global issues such as race, environmentalism, and gender equality. Global issues and modern media forms are tightly integrated in the lives of both rural and urban peoples in cultures all over the world.*

15.3 Visual Anthropology and Ethnographic Film

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Give examples of the early use of visual media in ethnographic fieldwork.
- Define the field of visual anthropology.
- Describe two examples of ethnographic film.
- Explain the ethical challenges associated with ethnographic film.

Although the subfield of media anthropology is relatively new, anthropologists have been incorporating media technologies into their methods of research and ethnographic representation since the early 20th century. An early pioneer of visual methods, Margaret Mead took some 200 photographs as part of her first fieldwork project in Samoa (Tiffany 2005). In the 1930s, Mead and Gregory Bateson used both photography and film in their joint fieldwork in Bali and New Guinea. Mead and Bateson embraced visual media as an innovative means of learning about social life and used photos and film to study childhood, public ceremonies, and dance. Together, they took about 33,000 photographs and recorded about 32,600 feet of film as part of their joint research (Jacknis 2020). Focusing on child development and dance, they used these visual materials to produce two photographic ethnographies and seven short films.

Visual anthropology is either the use of visual media as a research method or its study as a research topic. Whether they consider themselves visual anthropologists or not, most anthropologists take photos of the

people and places they encounter in their fieldwork. Visual anthropologists go further, using photography and film to document important events for fine-grained future analysis. As moments frozen in time, photographs allow for analytical contemplation and shared consideration. Film can be slowed down or sped up to focus on certain aspects of individual action or group dynamics that might otherwise go unnoticed. Images may be magnified to reveal minute details. Both film and photography allow for images to be placed side by side for comparison.

Visual anthropologists are also interested in how people in the cultures they study produce their own visual representations in the form of art, photography, and film. Visual anthropologists are interested in popular paintings, billboards, and graffiti as well as forms of photography and film.

FIGURE 15.3 An image from Margaret Mead's film *Trance and Dance in Bali*. Margaret Mead was an early pioneer in the use of visual media in anthropology. (credit: Gregory Bateson and Margaret Mead/Wikimedia Commons, Public Domain)

Early on, cultural anthropologists recognized that visual media made it possible to share the experiences encountered during anthropological research with their colleagues and students, and the general public. One example of many is the film *Trance and Dance in Bali* (1951), written and narrated by Mead, which features a Balinese dance called the kris. The kris dance dramatizes the story of a witch whose daughter is rejected as a bride to the king. In retaliation, the witch plots to spread chaos and pestilence in the land. When the king sends an emissary with a convoy of servants to stop the nefarious plan, the witch turns the emissary into a dragon. She then causes the followers of the dragon to fall into trance. When the dragon-emissary revives his followers, they emerge in a somnambulant state, stabbing themselves with daggers but inflicting no harm. After dancing the kris dance, the dancers are brought out of their trance with incense and holy water. Included in the US Library of Congress, this stunning early use of film in anthropology can be viewed at the Library of Congress website (https://openstax.org/r/LibraryofCongresswebsite) or on YouTube (https://openstax.org/r/YouTubeZ8YC0dnj4Jw).

Ethnographic film is the use of film in ethnographic representation as either a method, a record, or a means of reporting on anthropological fieldwork. Like documentary films, ethnographic films are nonfiction films in which live-action shots are edited and shaped into a central narrative drama. While the line between documentary and ethnographic film is blurry, ethnographic film is associated with the work of professional anthropologists and tends to focus explicitly on depictions of sociocultural processes.

Before Mead and Bateson's professional use of film, several filmmakers had made amateur ethnographic films depicting aspects of non-Western cultures. The very popular film *Nanook of the North* (1922), made by explorer Robert Flaherty and based on 16 months of living with the Inuit, follows an Inuit family in the Canadian Arctic. The film focuses on the heroism of husband Nanook and wife Nyla as they struggle against the harsh elements to meet their needs and raise their children. The film documents Inuit lifeways such as

traveling by dogsled and kayak, hunting walrus, and building an igloo out of glacier ice. In one controversial scene, the family visits a Canadian trading fort, where they express astonishment at instruments of modernity such as a phonograph. Though the film has been praised for its representation of Indigenous peoples as courageous and hardworking, others have criticized Flaherty for staging some of the events and even having his own common-law wife play the role of Nanook's wife in the film. Like Mead and Bateson's film, *Nanook of the North* is now held by the Library of Congress as one of the most significant examples of early documentary filmmaking. While some consider *Nanook* to be a precursor to ethnographic film, anthropologist Franz Boas dismissed it as completely irrelevant to anthropology due to Flaherty's use of artifice and staging (Schäuble 2018). The film can be viewed at the Internet Archive (https://openstax.org/r/nanookOfTheNorth1922) or on YouTube (https://openstax.org/r/nanooknorthvideo).

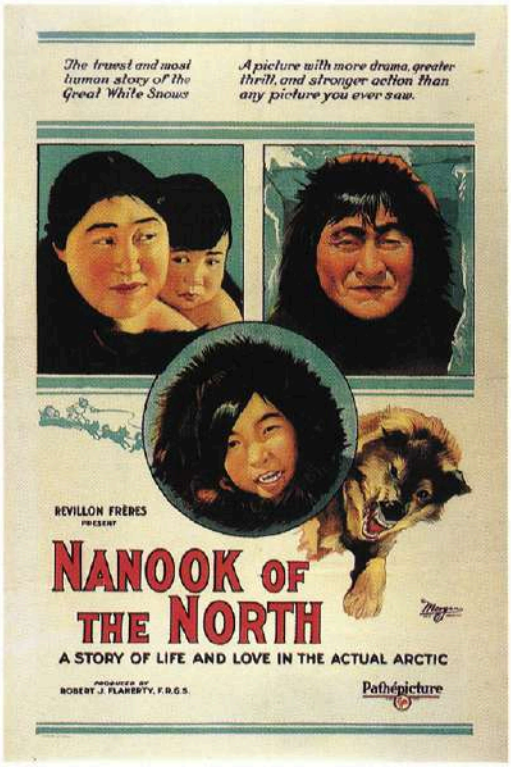

FIGURE 15.4 Promotional poster for *Nanook of the North*, considered by some to be one of the most significant examples of early documentary filmmaking. While based on field experience, a number of events in the film were staged. (credit: Robert J. Flaherty/Pathe Pictures/Wikimedia Commons, Public Domain)

From its roots in both amateur and professional filmmaking, ethnographic film became an increasingly important tool for teaching and popularizing anthropological research throughout the 20th century. In the 1950s, John Marshall and Timothy Asch pioneered a more objective, naturalist style of ethnographic film, attempting to avoid Western narratives and exoticization. With the development of the ability to simultaneously record sound in the 1960s, the commentary and conversations of people represented in ethnographic films became audible (even if translations still appeared in subtitles). Subjects could now address the camera directly. Around the same time, anthropologists began considering the power dynamics embedded in the production of ethnographic film—in particular, the ethical issues involved in White Western researchers controlling the representation of non-Western peoples.

Responding to these ethical challenges, many ethnographic filmmakers have turned away from the heavily crafted narrative methods of films such as *Nanook* toward a more purist style that represents unfolding action with little editing. New methods of representation have emerged, revealing the very act of filming itself and highlighting the relationship between filmmakers and those being filmed. Rather than using film as a means of teaching anthropology to students and the public, some experimental filmmakers conceptualize film as the creation of an entirely new sociocultural experience. The experimental ethnographic film *Manakamana*, for

instance, directed by Stephanie Spray and Pacho Velez and released in 2013, comprises 11 long shots of Nepalese pilgrims taking cable car rides to a mountaintop temple in Nepal. Rather than teaching the viewer about an anthropological topic, *Manakamana* provides live-action portraits of people and their relationships against the backdrop of the rugged landscape passing below them. Spray and Velez are collaborators in Harvard University's Sensory Ethnography Lab, a project dedicated to the experimental use of multisensory methods to create ethnographic media. You can view a trailer for the film on YouTube (https://openstax.org/r/manakamanatrailer).

15.4 Photography, Representation, and Memory

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Define the gaze and list important features of this concept.
- Give an example of the imperial gaze in popular photographic media.
- Describe the use of photography in colonial contexts.
- Discuss local techniques of self-representation through popular photography.

In addition to creating their own visual media, visual anthropologists conduct research on how the people they study produce visual media to represent themselves as well as cultural others.

Have you ever browsed through a copy of the magazine *National Geographic*? In the latter half of the 20th century, many American schools and middle-class households subscribed to this magazine as an educational resource for school-age children. Founded in 1888, the magazine has developed a reputation for its colorfully illustrated coverage of science, geography, history, and world cultures. Now owned in part by the Walt Disney Company, the magazine is published in 40 languages and has a global circulation of over six million.

What strikes many young people about *National Geographic* is not so much the informative textual content but rather the alluring images of non-Western peoples. Cultural anthropologist Catherine Lutz and sociologist Jane Collins (1993) set out to study how *National Geographic* depicted people in contexts outside the United States and western Europe. In their holistic approach, they conducted research into the production process at *National Geographic*, then subjected the photographs to rigorous content analysis, and finally interviewed people about how they made sense of the images.

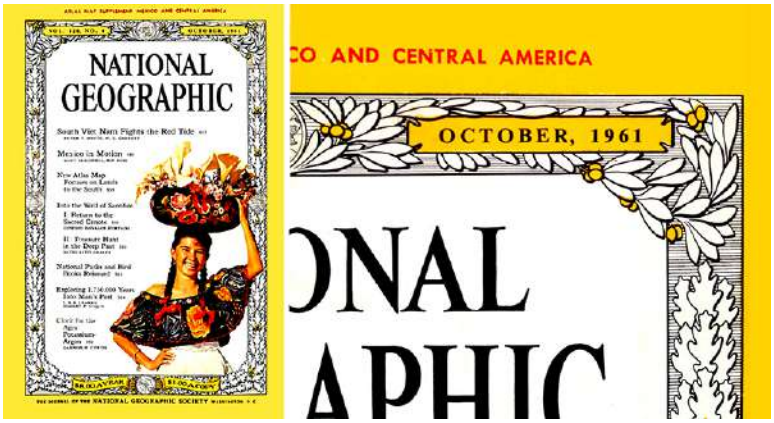

FIGURE 15.5 *National Geographic* cover from 1961 featuring the "exotic other." Researchers have noted that during the latter half of the twentieth century the magazine commonly portrayed non-Western people as exotic and close to nature. (credit: "NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC Magazine - October 1961 - South Vietnam Fights the Red Tide - Nam Việt Nam chiến đấu chống thủy triều đỏ" by manhhai/flickr, CC BY 2.0)

Based on analysis of 600 *National Geographic* photos depicting non-Western peoples from 1950 to 1986, Lutz and Collins noted that the magazine portrayed non-Western peoples as exotic, idealized, and close to nature. Very rarely did photographs in the magazine reveal any traces of the complex colonial and postcolonial histories of their subjects or their entanglements in national and global processes. Instead, *National Geographic* photographs tended to depict happy people immersed in purely traditional lifeways. Without

historical or political context, the apparent difference between "us" (the viewer) and "them" (the people depicted in the photographs) would seem to be developmental or evolutionary. In other words, the people depicted in the images were made to seem simpler or more backward than those viewing the images. Perhaps, the images seem to suggest, "they" have not yet achieved modernity. While emphasizing a theme of common humanity, the magazine nonetheless reproduced primitivist and orientalist stereotypes about non-Western peoples while obscuring the historical and political processes that have shaped their equally complex lifeways.

The Gaze of Photography

In the 1970s, film scholars developed the concept of **the gaze** to refer both to specific ways that viewers look at images of other people in visual media and to the gazes of those depicted within the images. Gaze theory attempts to understand what it means to view people and events through mass media.

Two key features of the gaze are important to this goal. First, the object being gazed at (the person or people in the image) is not aware of the viewer. This makes the gaze **voyeuristic**, like an anonymous peeping Tom looking through a window into a house. The gazer knows what is going, on but the people in the house (or the image) do not know they're being watched. Second, and because of the first point, the gaze implies a psychological relationship of power; the watching person has the power to scrutinize, analyze, and judge the watched people. The watcher can manipulate the perspective and conditions of watching. The watcher reserves the power to make sense of the image and to use the image however they please—for knowledge, pleasure, or criticism.

British film theorist Laura Mulvey (1975) used the concept of the gaze to develop a feminist approach to film studies. The **male gaze** describes how men look at women through any visual medium and even in everyday life. Beauty culture in western Europe and the United States positions women as objects to be gazed upon by men (and other women). Media scholars argue that women come to view themselves through the gaze of others, particularly men, who evaluate the attractiveness and desirability of their bodies. Thus, rather than experiencing her selfhood directly, a woman's self-image is routed through the male gaze.

The concept of the gaze is also used to think about other sociocultural power relations, particularly the historical processes of imperialism and colonialism. In the colonial period, the desire for conquest motivated strategic ways of gazing at cultural others. Through forms of media and image making developed in the 19th and early 20th centuries, Europeans developed an **imperial gaze**, positioning themselves as viewers of non-Western peoples. In the visual practices of empire, such as surveys and documentary photography, the lands and peoples were scrutinized, subjected to the domineering eye of European colonizers. The depictions of non-Western peoples in *National Geographic* are current manifestations of the imperial gaze.

Photography and the Colonial Gaze

Photography was invented in the early 19th century and became widespread in the period when European countries were beginning to establish formal colonial rule over African, Middle Eastern, and Asian territories. In colonial contexts, the imperial gaze framed how Europeans photographed colonial landscapes and colonized peoples, positioning them in strategic ways to justify colonial rule.

As the head of the Basel Mission Society's large archive of colonial photographs, historian Paul Jenkins (1993) has studied pictures taken by Swiss and German missionaries in Africa. The Basel Mission Society (BMS) was a Christian missionary group that participated in the larger trend of Christian missionizing in Africa in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Jenkins's inquiry sought to understand what the BMS photos reveal about the people in the photographs, the people who took the photos, and the wider conditions in which the photos were taken.

Jenkins's analysis focuses on one particular missionary, Christian Hornberger, who worked in southeastern Ghana in the late 19th century. In 1863, the BMS asked Hornberger to take photographs depicting missionary activities in Ghana to be sold to European Christians who donated to the African missionary effort. Hornberger took many pictures of African children, the mission station, the local landscape, and scenes from Indigenous life. Jenkins points out that the earliest photographs taken by Hornberger emphasize the strangeness of African peoples and environments, while the later ones seem to emphasize the kind of common humanity found in later *National Geographic* photos. In Hornberger's later photographs, Africans are depicted in ways

that would have been familiar to many Europeans: families are shown eating dinner together, women are depicted grinding corn, and local craftspeople are shown creating pottery.

A set of photographs of children dressed in European clothing caught Jenkins's eye. Who were these children, and why were there so many photos of them? Where were their parents? Digging deeper, Jenkins discovered that these were local "slave children" (1993, 100) bought into freedom by missionaries and taken to live on the mission compound. In West Africa at the time, people who fell into debt could "pawn" their children to work as servants in lieu of paying the debt. Sometimes, children were given to the priests of local shrines as payment for wrongdoing or gratitude for good fortune. As early Christian missionaries did not initially have much luck converting local peoples to Christianity, some BMS missionaries saw this practice as a way to both accumulate converts and drum up European support. BMS missionaries began offering European supporters the opportunity to "purchase" the freedom of a particular child, give the child a Christian name, and provide for the child's food, clothing, and other needs. Most of the African children in BMS photos of the time are subjects of this child-sponsorship program.

FIGURE 15.6 Hornberger's photograph of "emancipated" children. These children, who had been sold into servitude by their parents, were purchased by White missionaries and brought to live with them. Many were unhappy in this unfamiliar setting and ran way to reunite with their families. (credit: "L R and 2 Native Children, Congo, ca. 1900–1915" by Unknown/Wikimedia Commons, Public Domain)

While this may have seemed like a win-win scheme all around, the "liberation" of African slave children was apparently experienced by the many of the children as a new form of enslavement. Most were unhappy living on the mission compound, divorced from their home cultures, forced to wear uncomfortable clothing and speak a strange language. Many of them ran away, back to the families they had been serving before the missionaries intervened. By 1868, the BMS was forced to abandon the whole scheme. The backstory of Hornberger's photographs of these children vividly illustrates the strategic artifice of the imperial gaze—how missionaries used photography to position themselves as saviors while local people often saw them as agents of colonial domination. The entire collection of photographs from the Basel Mission Society is archived at the BM Archives website (https://openstax.org/r/bmarchives).

The Modernity of Postcolonial Photography

Focusing on more contemporary contexts, many media anthropologists analyze the images produced by postcolonial subjects themselves, along with the producers of those images and the production process. Rather than scrutinizing the imperial or ethnographic gaze, these scholars are interested in local forms of gazing at the self and others in photographs.

Anthropologist Liam Buckley (2000) has conducted research on studio photography in the West African country of Gambia. Through interviews with photographers and their subjects, Buckley traced the development of photographic strategies from the more realist style of the 1950s to the more fanciful and imaginative style common from the 1970s to the early 2000s.

In the 1950s, photographs were valued for faithfully depicting the character, mood, and personality of the subject, what people referred to as *jikko*. More recently, people began to prefer being photographed against elaborate studio backdrops depicting scenes of modern leisure and cosmopolitan travels. A staging popular with young people in particular features the subject relaxing amid an array of appliances, such as radio, television, and an open refrigerator full of cold beverages and tasty foods. Some backdrops depict subjects climbing the stairs to board an airplane or visiting a foreign tourist destination. Gambians use the term *juuntuwaay* to describe the props and imported goods included in these scenes, which might include bicycles, pens, and sunglasses. Young people use these objects to "'complete' themselves" (Buckley, 2000), thus using the photograph as a form of aspirational identity formation. The goal of this form of portraiture is not to depict personal *jikko* but rather to represent *jamano*, a sense of fashionable novelty and change.

15.5 News Media, the Public Sphere, and Nationalism

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Describe the worldview presented in news media.
- Define the concept of the public sphere.
- Explain the importance of the public sphere to the study of news media.
- Distinguish from independent media.

While photography arrests attention with images, the various genres of news media draw people in with narratives about what's going on in their local communities and the larger world. A person who reads or views the news learns not only about current events but also about *what counts* as a current event—and, implicitly, what doesn't count as news (and thus doesn't matter to other people and shouldn't really matter to them). People learn to view the world in a certain way and to position their communities and themselves within that worldview. The top stories in national newspapers typically highlight the actions of political and economic leaders as the most important stories of the day. Political news is presented as an unfolding drama within or among nation-states—the United States establishes sanctions against Myanmar, for instance, or China takes action against Hong Kong protesters. Economic news is dominated by the gyrations of capitalist markets, both global and national, emphasizing the perspectives of the investors and business owners who make (or lose) money in those markets. Like the discipline of economics, news media take a market-centered approach to covering the economy, rather than a people-centered approach that might highlight labor conditions or environmental effects.

Some of the first news media were handwritten weekly newssheets that circulated in Venice in the 16th century, relaying information about European politics and wars. In the early 17th century, German and Dutch publishers began using the printing press to mass-produce newspapers for the growing population of literate readers in Europe, mainly merchants and lower-level government officials. Early newspapers reflected forms of discussion and debate emerging from the coffeehouses and salons of Europe, dominated by the concerns of the rising merchant classes that participated in those public arenas of discourse. German scholar Jurgen Habermas (1989) links this process to the emergence of the **public sphere**. Ideally, the public sphere is a domain of social life where people represent, learn about, and discuss the important issues of the day. It is distinct from both the private economic sphere and the sphere of public authority, including government, the military, and the police. The public sphere provides an important stage for the expression of a wide range of

popular opinions with the goal of reaching consensus and influencing government policy. According to Habermas, newspapers were essential to the construction of the public sphere in western Europe and therefore were fundamental tools in the emergence of democratic forms of rule. A summary of Habermas's foundational argument about the rise and eventual corruption of the public sphere can be viewed on YouTube (https://openstax.org/r/habermasstructural).

Moreover, newspapers were key to processes of language standardization, uniting audiences from regional communities speaking various, sometimes mutually unintelligible dialects. As mentioned in a previous chapter, newspapers thus laid the foundation for the "imagined community" of the nation-state.

A glance at any national newspaper, whether in print or online, demonstrates how news media continue to serve as tools in the construction of public spheres and imagined communities today. With the invention of new genres of media, news discourse has expanded into radio, television, and the Internet, providing an even stronger force for the consolidation of national identities. Conducting research in Malaysia, media anthropologist John Postill (2006) describes how the Malaysian government strategically used state-sponsored media to consolidate a unified nation-state out of an ethnically diverse collection of former colonies. In one community, that of the Iban people on the island of Borneo, the state replaced local-language media with Malaysian-language media in an effort to bind the Iban more tightly to the state. Rather than completely erasing cultural differences within the nation-state, however, the Malaysian state media promoted a certain version of Iban "cultural heritage" while simultaneously undermining Iban political and cultural autonomy.

State media are media that are entirely or partially owned by the government. In many countries, including most African ones, the state has its own media apparatus, including a news agency, newspapers, and radio and television stations. **Independent media** are media that are privately owned. But wait, one might ask, isn't all news media supposed to be independent from government? If a state had its own news media, wouldn't that just be propaganda? In the United States, news media have traditionally emphasized journalistic independence and even critical opposition to the government. News media are thought to be the "watchdogs of the people," maintaining critical pressure on government leaders and institutions in order to maintain accountability and prevent corruption and abuse of power. This notion that journalists should be critical of government is a near-universal tenet of professional journalism in capitalist democracies. However, even in the United States, the government is heavily involved in shaping news texts and organizations. Through briefings and press releases, the White House press secretary and other public relations officials exert considerable control over the representation of the positions and activities of government officials. The American government funds the global media organization Voice of America, producing radio, television, and digital content in more than 47 languages all over the world. However, the most prominent American news organizations are independently owned and produced.

But are privately owned news media in capitalist countries completely independent? Rather than being dominated by the government, privately owned media are subject to the forces of the market as well as the demands of owners and investors. That is, their commitment to the truth may be challenged by their desire to sell their media to the largest audiences. If sensationalized conflict and conspiracy theories attract audiences, news media may become dominated by misleading half-truths and divisive fantasies. Another strong force threatening the independence of private media is the desire to sell lucrative advertising space to powerful business interests. If the people who pay for advertising favor a market-centered approach to economic issues, then stories about working conditions and environmentalism are likely to be marginalized by market news.

How do journalists handle the conflict between the pressures of government and commercial interests and their role as watchdogs for the public interest? For a firsthand example, read this account by chapter author, Jennifer Hasty,

> *When I first came to Ghana, I wanted to understand the role of newspapers in the wave of democratization sweeping across the African continent in the 1990s. In my first few days in Ghana, I bought as many newspapers as I could find and read them studiously, marking stories with marginal comments and comparing front pages side by side. The state-sponsored newspapers highlighted the benevolent actions of government in promoting economic development and social stability. Frequently, the front pages of such publications featured an enthusiastic headline about a government*

project to build a new road or market complex, illustrated with a color photograph of President Jerry Rawlings wielding a pickax or operating a bulldozer to officially launch the project. Most stories foregrounded the official speeches of government officials, emphasizing themes of national cohesion and responsible citizenship. In contrast, the front pages of the private newspapers shouted out bold allegations of corruption among government officials with stories often based on anonymous sources and rumor. In these papers, Rawlings was often depicted wearing mirrored sunglasses and army fatigues, portrayed as a barely reformed military coup leader with no interest in real democracy.

These two versions of the national political reality were completely at odds with one another. And yet, in my initial interviews, both state and private journalists maintained that they were the true forces of democracy in Ghana, protecting the interests of the people. Both maintained strong commitments to journalistic neutrality and objectivity. How could they produce such wildly different optics on the political sphere? How could state journalists fervently believe that they were promoting democracy when, in daily practice, they were echoing the public pronouncements of government officials and providing strategically flattering coverage of the actions of the state? How could private journalists claim to be responsible purveyors of truth when their sensational stories were so often based on rumor and stirred up political and regional conflicts?

Anthropologists frequently discover such contradictions between what people say they're doing and what they're actually doing. This is one of the advantages of long-term fieldwork; it gives anthropologists time to get behind the official story presented in texts and interviews by conducting extended periods of participant observation.

Working at the premier state newspaper, the Daily Graphic, I discovered that the whole working life of a state journalist is structured in such a way that the state does indeed seem to be a benevolent patron and the words uttered by state officials do seem to be the superior and responsible version of national reality. Every working day, state journalists were invited to state ministries to cover official events. They didn't have to scramble around trying to gain access to government officials, as private journalists did, and they never faced rejection or exclusion when they showed up at state functions. Instead, they were politely ushered into the realm of the state to witness some important (or not) announcement or action. After the event, state journalists were given copies of the speeches they'd just heard and provided with snacks and a beverage—and an envelope with a small sum of cash. This small gift was referred to as ***soli****, short for solidarity, and it symbolized the implicit reciprocity between state officials and state journalists. When they got back to the newsroom, state journalists sat down, printed speeches in hand, and wrote stories depicting the state in the way they themselves had just experienced the state: a kind and thoughtful patron supporting the welfare and development of the people.*

At the three privately owned newspapers I worked for during my fieldwork, the working day was much more stressful and antagonistic. Considered divisive and irresponsible by the state, the private press had been banned by Rawlings's military government in the 1980s. In the 1990s, the private press was just reemerging as part of the overall process of democratization, but the government still considered private journalists to be political enemies. Rawlings issued angry public diatribes against the private press, threatening criminal libel suits with long prison terms. Not only were private journalists not invited to daily government events, but they were not even allowed to attend. Many government officials dodged the phone calls of private journalists, and some refused to speak to them at all. Ordinary Ghanaians, still spooked by the government repression of the previous decade, often demanded anonymity as a condition of speaking to private journalists. Excluded from official channels of public discourse, the private press was forced to rely on unnamed sources and rumors. From their point of view, the antagonistic representation of the state as corrupt and repressive was the truth as they experienced it every day.

Taken together, the state and private news media created a highly contentious public sphere with competing ideologies—versions of political reality associated with particular groups. While the government used the state press to build national unity, the private press challenged the legitimacy of the state and its commitment to democracy. Visit the news website Graphic Online

(https://openstax.org/r/graphiconline), the online news platform of the Daily Graphic.

PROFILES IN ANTHROPOLOGY

Elizabeth Bird

Personal History: Elizabeth Bird (https://openstax.org/r/facebook1674658669247949) was born and raised in Newcastle upon Tyne in northeast England. As a child, she was an avid reader, especially drawn to historical and fantasy literature. Reading about various societies in different time periods, Bird developed an early interest in other cultures and the past. As a self-described "shy and rather unsociable" child (personal communication), she developed a more analytical view toward social groups. She remarks, "I have heard that many anthropologists grew up feeling they don't quite fit in—that would be me!"

Bird studied anthropology at Durham University and folklife studies at the University of Leeds, both in England. She then earned an interdisciplinary PhD from the University of Strathclyde in Scotland. A few years later, she moved to the United States, where she earned an MA in journalism from the University of Iowa. She then became a professor of anthropology at the University of South Florida.

Area of Anthropology: Bird pioneered the anthropology of news media. At Iowa, she wrote about the connection between folklore/myth and journalistic narratives, especially in tabloid newspapers.

Accomplishments in the Field: Anthropologists in the 1980s generally dismissed media as a topic for research, but Bird considered this view shortsighted given the ubiquity of media in societies all over the world and the centrality of media to contemporary culture. In her first book, *For Enquiring Minds: A Cultural Study of Supermarket Tabloids* (1992), Bird argues that tabloid newspapers such as the *National Enquirer* build on and feed larger cultural narratives in the general folklore of American life. In interviews with readers of the tabloid press, she discovers that they are attracted to tabloids for a variety of reasons and deploy a diverse set of strategies for finding meaning in these texts. Prescient of the conspiracy theories and "fake news" controversies of the early 21st century, Bird's work on tabloids the 1980s and 1990s found that many readers are alienated from mainstream American culture.

In this part of her career, Bird's main focus was on the audiences of media, using ethnographic and qualitative research to understand how people in a culture read and use media in their everyday lives. This research came together in her book *The Audience in Everyday Life: Living in a Media World* (2003). In this book, Bird explores how people pick and choose different elements of media as they construct their class and ethnic identities, participate in religious or political communities, and contemplate the meaning of scandals and other publicized cultural narratives. While much mass communication research has focused on "the audience" as a monolithic, unified entity, Bird shows how an ethnographic approach reveals "the audience" to be a highly differentiated assemblage of people using a wide variety of techniques to comprehend and use mass media as a cultural reservoir.

Importance of Their Work: Elizabeth Bird was among the first anthropologists to take media seriously as an object of serious academic study. While many mass communication scholars were analyzing the texts of news media, Bird used interviews and participant observation to explore how people actually make sense of these texts and weave them into their thoughts and practices.

Around 2009–2010, Bird moved away from media as an exclusive object of study, returning to earlier research on social history, heritage, and memory in a Nigerian community. Incorporating media analysis and oral histories, she now conducts research on a traumatic massacre that took place in that community in 1967. She documents how print and broadcast media have erased popular memory of the event and how social media has revived and activated personal memories of it. Bird has described the Asaba Memorial Project (https://openstax.org/r/asabamemorial) as "the highlight of [her] career."

15.6 Community, Development, and Broadcast Media

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Explain how radio is associated with different themes and audiences than print media.
- Define the concept of community radio.
- Explain how community radio gives expression to local forms of identity and social action.
- Define the notion of Indigenous media.

The media scholar Marshall McLuhan is famous for his aphorism "**the medium is the message**" (1964, 23). What he meant by this is that each genre of media has its own set of features that suggest certain uses and kinds of content. In contrast to print media, radio allows for real-time talk and discussion as well as music. Radio reaches beyond the limited audience of avid readers who have time to focus on text to wider audiences of listeners who may be too busy to read or have not had access to formal education. As an oral medium, radio lends itself more readily to linguistic diversity. In places where many languages are spoken, often the language of state is the only one that circulates in written form, while the rest function as spoken languages only. Print media may therefore be limited to dominant languages, while the oral genre of radio can provide content in alternative and even multiple languages. Finally, while reading print media is largely a solitary and silent experience, radio provides a shared and noisy experience. A personal experience shared by Jennifer Hasty illustrates this.

> *In Ghana, I could nearly always hear a radio blasting from someone's compound or kiosk or car. Radio was woven into daily life, a sort of auditory backdrop to everyday work and leisure. News headlines were read out each day on the morning talk shows, generating discussions in households and buses as people made their way to work. On the popular radio talk shows, Ghanaians from all walks of life called in to broadcast their perspectives on the issues of the day. Even during the music shows, listeners participated with heartfelt requests dedicated to friends, lovers, and family members.*

Because of its distinctive features, the genre of radio is not as narrowly focused as print media on themes of political economy such as nationalism and democracy. While including attention to current events, radio typically provides listeners with a wider variety of content, including music, talk shows, drama, and quiz shows. In an effort to provide relevant content to the broadest spectrum of listeners in an area, local radio stations design their programming to reflect the tastes and issues of particular communities. Certainly, print media does this to some degree, but the audience for print media constitutes a narrower segment of the community. Radio attempts to address the community as a whole.

Commercial and state radio are dominant forces in the media landscapes of most countries, but an alternative form, **community radio**, has been growing rapidly in recent decades. *Community radio* refers to radio stations that are community owned and operated, staffed by groups of professionals and volunteers. The involvement of local volunteers allows for community participation in programming, production, and on-air performance. Community radio stations often focus on local current events, educational programs, and development initiatives. Typically, they are low wattage with minimal range and thus are nonprofit.

In places where people want to start up a community radio station but lack the capital and technological know-how, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and development organizations have provided support in partnership with community organizations. Such collaborations between community groups and foreign NGOs have made possible the start-up of community radio stations in many countries, including Nepal, Sri Lanka, and the Philippines. Throughout Africa, community radio stations sponsored by government and/or NGOs have been used to educate rural peoples about farming methods and spread public interest health messages. In Thailand, the global leader in community radio, more than 7,000 independent radio stations have been started since 2001.

Established in 1997, the Nepalese station Radio Sagarmatha was the first independent community radio station in South Asia. The station was started by the Nepal Forum of Environmental Journalists in an effort to break the government monopoly on radio and provide better coverage of community issues. Regulated by government, Radio Sagarmatha is not allowed to address political or economic issues. Focusing instead on

community development, the station features daily discussion programs addressing such issues as public health, education, women's empowerment, and workers' concerns. Though not explicitly political, the station identifies itself as the defender of democracy and free speech in Nepal, giving voice to the people. In 2005, the army raided the studio, seizing equipment and arresting staff for rebroadcasting a BBC interview with a politician. The station reemerged after the incident and remains on air today. With 2.5 million regular listeners, Radio Sagarmatha is one of the largest and most successful community radio stations in the world.

Community radio stations in Brazil have faced similar forms of government regulation and harassment. Anthropologist Derek Pardue (2011) describes the expansion of community radio in the wake of political liberalization in the 1980s. As of 2013, there were 4,700 community radio stations operating in Brazil, an increase of 70 percent since 2002. Moreover, approximately 5,000 such stations have been shut down by government, their equipment confiscated and management prosecuted as felons. Associated with free speech and political activism, community radio attracts involvement by counterculture artists and performers such as the hip-hop communities of impoverished favela neighborhoods in São Paulo. Through community radio, local hip-hop artists narrate their stories of hardship and heroism, defining their spatially marginal neighborhoods as economically and politically marginalized *periferias* (peripheries). Pardue describes how community radio gives hip-hop artists and other community members a platform for demonstrating their awareness of social issues and command of information. Using slang that signals racial and class identities, they publicize otherwise unreported events and perspectives such as police violence and gang activities, providing a much more inclusive public sphere than commercial media.

In Australia, more than 400 independent radio stations broadcast in 70 different community languages. Many of these community radio stations have been started by Indigenous Australian communities as a means of cultural survival and language preservation. **Indigenous media** refers to the use of media by Indigenous communities for community identity, cultural representation, and activism. In the 1990s, some Indigenous broadcasters developed the ability to link community radio stations together in regional and national networks. As many Indigenous community stations featured call-in request programs, the linking of stations allowed a person in one community to publicly greet a relative in a faraway community with a song dedication. Anthropologist Daniel Fisher (2009) describes how radio has become a way for Indigenous Australian people to celebrate kinship connections in the context of kin dispersal due to government policy, travel, work, and incarceration. Throughout the 20th century, Indigenous children were seized from their families and sent to state institutions and foster homes in order to assimilate them into White Australian settler culture. In the present, Indigenous family ties are further troubled by the disproportionate numbers of young men incarcerated in Australian prisons. In this context, call-in request shows have become wildly popular on Indigenous radio networks, as relatives phone in to dedicate emotionally charged songs about love, separation, and loss to relatives in distant places.

Inspired by a wide variety of social issues, community radio is catching hold in the United States as well. In response to the domination of American radio by large media corporations, the US Congress passed the Local Community Radio Act in 2010, authorizing the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to provide licenses to low-powered community radio stations. A group of community organizers in Madrid, New Mexico, just outside of Albuquerque, was awarded a license and began broadcasting KMRD 96.9 in 2015. As an alternative to commercial radio programming, KMRD, like many community stations, features more diverse and locally relevant content. Local DJs host call-in and talk programs about community issues and spin a wide variety of music, including alternative, pop, techno, garage, folk, and western. Local bands get frequent airplay, stimulating the local music scene. On Monday nights, you can hear a program devoted to African music, hosted by the author of this chapter. Those not within range of the station can listen to KRMD online (https://openstax.org/r/kmrdlisten). Over a thousand new community radio stations have emerged as a result of the Local Community Radio Act.

15.7 Broadcasting Modernity and National Identity

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Identify ways in which governments and development organizations use broadcast media.
- Detail forms of modernity conveyed by broadcast media in non-Western contexts.
- Explain the cultural significance of soap opera.
- Describe the relationship between broadcast media and religious identities and experiences.

Broadcast media are, of course, not always grassroots tools of community expression and development. Even outside of the commercial domain, forms of radio and television are produced by development organizations and state governments to address specific development goals, a more top-down model of community broadcasting. Throughout the 1980s, a radio project for delivering basic education was carried out in the Dominican Republic by the US Agency for International Development. The project was designed to reach schoolchildren living in mountainous and isolated regions of the country. Gathering around radios in community centers, children listened to lessons on reading, math, science, and history. Students were given worksheets and books to supplement the radio lectures. Eighty-two community learning centers were established by 1982. Over time, local community groups and the Dominican government contributed funding to keep the project going. Similar programs to use radio for basic education have been established in other countries, including Mexico and Kenya.

As with radio, the potentially broad reach of television beyond literate audiences has made it useful as a medium of education, particularly for students lacking access to conventional brick-and-mortar schools. In most countries outside of western Europe and the United States, broadcast media were initially developed by the state because local elites often lacked the capital to start radio and television stations. In the 1960s, the newly independent African states used their newly formed state broadcasting corporations to consolidate diverse and distant populations as a united audience for national messages and initiatives.

In her research, communication scholar Carla Heath (1996) shows how Ghanaian children's television programs serve as a means of cultivating a distinctively modern national culture that embraces innovation and change while remaining grounded in Ghanaian cultural values. For one program, *By the Fireside*, Ghanaian schoolchildren were recruited to act out Ghanaian folktales, discussing how their moral messages could be applied to contemporary Ghanaian life. Against a background depicting a rural village, children in simple smocks and African-print clothing opened the show with songs and dances, then engaged in greetings, jokes, and riddles with the two adult storytellers. As a storyteller narrated a tale, the children acted out certain scenes and commented on the themes of the story in musical interludes. After the story, children were called upon to recite the moral lessons they had learned. In this way, traditional stories were summoned to discuss such contemporary issues as corruption, political conflicts, and juvenile delinquency. Heath argues that such programs promote a distinctive form of modern citizenship rooted in local morality and wisdom.

Anthropologist Lila Abu-Lughod (2002) similarly demonstrates how elites have used television dramas to cultivate the ideal of the virtuous modern citizen among women, youth, and rural people in Egypt. One serial drama, *Hilmiyya Nights*, focused on the lives of a group of characters from the traditional neighborhood of Hilmiyya in Cairo. The show dramatizes their fortunes and relationships from the 1940s, when Egypt was ruled by King Farouk and the British, all the way up to the Egyptian reaction to the US-led Gulf War of 1990. Rather than focusing solely on personal desires, trysts, and betrayals, as American soap operas do, the social lives of the *Hilmiyya Nights* characters were embedded in historical and political events, making the show a powerful form of commentary on Egyptian national life. Driven by its project of upliftment, the overall theme of the show was one of national unity. Characters from all classes were led astray by the temptations of sex, money, and power, but they inevitably came to see the errors of their ways, putting love of country above all personal desires. Interviewing women who watched *Hilmiyya Nights*, Abu-Lughod discovered that their love for the show had little to do with the uplifting messages about Egyptian citizenship. In fact, some identified strongly with the most problematic female characters, who schemed and connived in pursuit of sex and money.

Soap opera is a popular format targeted to female audiences in many parts of the world. In India, anthropologist Purnima Mankekar (1999) examined a number of television serials produced by the state television station, Doordarshan, in the 1980s and 1990s. In a well-rounded holistic analysis, Mankekar examines production, text, and reception, the latter an aspect often neglected in media studies. Mankekar interviewed the writers, directors, and producers of these programs and subjected the programs themselves to a fine-grained textual analysis. Her focus, however, was audience reception. Among the questions she asked were how Indian middle-class women viewed these programs, what sense they made of the content, and how they discussed the themes and issues and applied them to their own lives. Indian state television has always worked to cultivate an idealized notion of Indian womanhood, implicitly defined as Hindu, middle-class, north Indian, and upper caste. Mankekar's analysis focuses on two Hindu epic dramas, *The Mahabharat* (1989–1990) and *The Ramayan* (1987–1988). Through these dramas, state television constructed those ideals for the intended audience of Indian women. These epics feature two ideals of womanhood: Sita, who is demure, compliant, and self-sacrificing, contrasted with the enraged Draupaudi, whose reckless husband's political gamble results in her public humiliation. In interviews with Mankekar, women viewers discussed how they identified with each character in different ways and in relation to different contexts of their own lives. As the programs aired in the midst of rising Hindu nationalism in India, they became a means of asserting Hindu forms of heritage and morality as well as gendered identities.

While in the West, modernity is typically associated with rationality and secularism, many media anthropologists have studied how radio and television enable distinctly modern expressions of religious beliefs and experiences. Media anthropologist Katrien Pype (2015) has conducted research on television dramas in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, with a focus on the importance of religious themes and emotional forms of engagement. In one drama, *The Heart of Man*, two sophisticated urban women become witches in order to harm their romantic rivals. As a result of their occult rituals, one of the women goes blind, leading her to confess her sins to an evangelical pastor. The pastor grants her forgiveness and exorcises the demons from her body. So powerful were the depictions of witchcraft that some viewers reported feeling as if they had become bewitched themselves just by watching the show. Viewers interpreted their emotional responses as signs of the deeper meanings of the program. Not merely entertainment, Congolese television dramas structured by such tales of evangelical redemption are experienced as episodes in an ongoing spiritual war between the Holy Spirit and the devil. Though fictional, such television programs connect with the worldviews of evangelical Christians through the conduit of emotional and bodily response.

15.8 Digital Media, New Socialities

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Define the concept of sociality.
- Explain how digital media enable new forms of sociality.
- Identify how digital media shape friendships and romantic relationships.
- Define the concept of media ideology.
- Provide a detailed example of the illicit use of digital media.

As much of this textbook demonstrates, anthropologists most often conduct research on topics involving face-to-face sociocultural interaction such as public ceremonies, religious rituals, work, political activities, and forms of economic exchange. Over the past 30 years, however, anthropologists have begun to conduct research on forms of culture in which face-to-face interaction has been replaced with screens and keyboards. In the Internet era, media anthropologists explore how people connect with others digitally, forming collective identities based on characteristics such as common interests, gender, race, ethnicity, and religion. Some anthropologists are interested in the entirely new modes of social interaction made possible by the Internet, such as hacking, blogging, and creating and sharing memes. Digital media also reshape other domains of sociocultural practice, such as shopping, financial transactions, transportation, religious worship, and kin relations. Encompassing the whole realm of social interaction, cultural anthropologists use the term **sociality** to describe how people construct and maintain their personal and group relations. Anthropologists are curious about how new forms of digital media function as tools of sociality.

Digital Socialities: Personal and Political

How do you talk to your friends on a day-to-day basis? How do you arrange to meet up as a group? If you're an American, it's very likely that texts and social media are involved in your communication and coordination with your friends. Studying American teens from 2004 to 2007, scholar Danah Boyd found that social networking sites such as Facebook were key to the formation of new friendships and the consolidation of friend groups, while texting deepened one-on-one relationships (Ito et al. 2010). In fact, friendship was the primary reason given by teens for engaging in digital forms of media (rather than, say, looking up information for school projects or texting their parents about where they are at midnight on a Friday night). Of course, the social preoccupation of American teens is not new, nor is it surprising. But digital media provide new modes of engagement, such as the "always on" texting of best friends or social media "friends" who are not really friends at all but strangers or even enemies. Social media also provide new tools for authoring self-identity as well as the ability to search out information about others that may undermine their own professed identities.

While American teens generally embrace social media and texting as ways of building friendships, they are considerably more troubled by the role of digital media in the other side of social relationships: breaking up. In an undergraduate class one day, anthropologist Ilana Gershon asked her students, "What counts as a bad breakup?" (2010). Expecting stories of lying and infidelity, Gershon was surprised to hear so many students complain about breakups via text or Facebook. Anyone who has ever signed into a social media site to discover that their sweetie's relationship status has changed to "single" knows the kind of confusion and heartache caused by using digital media in this way.

FIGURE 15.7 Perhaps not the best use of texting—on both sides. In societies all over the world, digital media have become essential elements of social interaction. (attribution: Copyright Rice University, OpenStax, under CC BY 4.0 license)

Intrigued by the ambiguities of digital etiquette in the realm of romance, Gershon wrote a book exploring how Americans use digital media to manage and even terminate ambiguous or troubled relationships. At the heart of the matter, according to Gershon, are **media ideologies**—that is, sets of ideas about the functionality of digital media and their relationship to other forms of communication, such as the telephone and face-to-face conversation. For some Americans, using digital messaging to break up is an ideal way of avoiding an intense emotional scene. This notion relies on a media ideology in which different forms of communication can usually be substituted for one another in the interests of efficiency and ease of use. For others, however, the text breakup is unfair, disrespectful, and cowardly, as the breaking-up process is made into a unilateral speech act rather than a consensual act based on dialogue. Digital media allow the breaker-upper to avoid witnessing the consequences of their action. In this media ideology, different forms of communication are appropriate to different forms of social action and cannot be substituted for one another without careful consideration of the emotional consequences.

In societies all over the world, digital media have become essential elements of social interaction, from the most personal and romantic relationships to larger, more public collectivities. Both media anthropologists and communication scholars have contributed to an effort to de-westernize media studies by exploring the use of

digital media in contexts outside of the United States and western Europe. In societies with repressive governments, traditional media and face-to-face political action are often tightly controlled, making digital media important tools of social interaction and political resistance. Media scholars Annaelle Sreberny and Gholam Khiabany (2010) highlight the crucial role of blogging in popular expression and political activism in Iran over the past several decades. There are more than 700,000 blogs in Iran, many of them authored by women. Suppressed in the public arena, Iranian intellectuals have embraced blogging as a way to express their ideas. Though many Iranian blogs are devoted to personal reflections or commentary on entertainment or sports, Sreberny and Khiabany show how bloggers often convey subtle political messages in their seemingly personal writing. Like Egyptian and Indian soap operas, Iranian blogs are always embedded in sociopolitical contexts, whether they are explicitly political or not. Some blogs are, in fact, stridently political, and many political bloggers have been jailed by the government as dissidents.

Similarly, bloggers in Central and South America form activist communities working for social justice and equality (Arriaga and Villar 2021). Afro-Cuban activist Sandra Abd'Allah-Alvarez Ramírez blogs on issues of race and gender in Cuba. Journalist Silvana Bahia operates an organization in Brazil that works to spread the tools of digital technology to diverse communities, in particular Afro-Brazilian women. She has been involved in efforts to teach programming to women, showing them how to apply digital skills to further social projects. She envisions a more inclusive digital sphere that brings in the perspectives of Black, LGBTQ+, low-income, and disadvantaged groups.

Digital Shadowlands: Illicit Media

Digital media enable and enhance social interaction, deepening relationships and activating imagined communities for social change. However, these new forms of media have a darker side. Digital media are also a tool for piracy, smuggling, scams, human trafficking, and illegal forms of pornography. Frequently, these illicit forms operate across the gulf of global inequality separating wealthy societies from poorer ones. Human trafficking, for instance, often involves abducting youth from impoverished rural communities and smuggling them into urban and wealthier communities to be forced into prostitution. Piracy, on the other hand, often involves making illegal copies of music and movies produced in wealthier countries available to people in poorer communities who may not otherwise be able to afford them.

The digital shadowlands provide opportunities for those left out of legal, mainstream opportunities in the digital economy. Sakawa is a troubling example of this. Around 2010 in Ghana, a new social group emerged. People began to notice that some young men in their twenties were enjoying a very luxurious lifestyle: driving expensive cars such as Lexuses and Range Rovers, wearing designer clothing and shoes, drinking champagne, and living in enormous mansions. How were they becoming so wealthy? During this time, Ghana was experiencing an oil boom, but that wealth was concentrated among older elites. The vast population of poor and working-class people have not benefited all that much from oil wealth. Commonly, young men with little education are unemployed, with very little chance of ever escaping poverty. This new class of conspicuously rich young men were not particularly educated or well-connected, but they had discovered a new way to make money. Combining digital media with spiritual techniques, they had invented a new moneymaking scheme called **sakawa**.

A Hausa term meaning "putting inside," *sakawa* refers to magically enhanced Internet fraud, mainly targeting foreigners. Before they become sakawa practitioners, these young men are often unemployed, sleeping on the streets, not knowing where their next meal is coming from. Often, they report noticing very stylish and well-fed young people apparently making lots of money by doing something in Internet cafés. Sometimes the scammers actively recruit such targets, teaching them Internet skills to carry out the elaborate schemes. The typical con is pretending to be a woman romantically interested in men from Europe, the United States, or Asia. Another, less common scheme involves using fake documents to persuade foreigners to invest in gold, timber, or oil concessions. Even more important than technological skills are the sophisticated social skills involved in creating strategic online personalities, cultivating trust with foreign White men in faraway places, and knowing just how and when to make requests for money.

Many scammers report practicing these techniques for several weeks or months with only modest success, then learning about the "spiritual side" of sakawa. In order to become magnificently wealthy, sakawa

practitioners believe it is necessary to become apprenticed to a spiritual leader who can guarantee great success in exchange for performing certain rituals on a regular basis. New apprentices are often instructed to sleep in coffins and anoint their bodies with special medicines. Some are required to have sex with several women each day and deliver their undergarments to the spiritual leader. Some must chew live cockroaches, lizards, or maggots. Ghanaians are horrified by rumors of incest and human sacrifice as scammers are said to perform more and more difficult forms of spiritual service to their masters. Though many refuse to reveal the exact nature of these rituals, numerous sakawa boys report that their efforts to extract money from foreigners suddenly became much more successful after performing them. With sudden windfalls from scamming, sakawa boys often throw epic parties and buy expensive gifts for their friends. In his documentary film *Sakawa*, Ghanaian filmmaker Ben Asamoah depicts the practices and communities of sakawa in Ghana.

VIDEO

A trailer to the documentary film *Sakawa* by Ben Asamoah can be watched on YouTube (https://openstax.org/r/sakawatrailer).

After a time, the thrill of this lifestyle wears off, and sakawa boys come to feel enslaved by the constant ritual demands of their spiritual leaders. If a sakawa boy refuses to perform assigned chores, however, he may break out in a rash, suffer paralysis, or become deaf or mute. Some report that friends have died when attempting to quit sakawa.

Sakawa is widely condemned in Ghanaian society. Government officials, journalists, and religious leaders have all spoken out against it, and the police have even arrested and prosecuted some sakawa scammers. Many Ghanaians lament the unbridled celebration of wealth as a marker of social status, arguing that children should be instilled with traditional values of hard work, honesty, and modest living.

Sakawa may seem like a shocking and unusual combination of digital media with supernatural beliefs and practices, but at the root of this phenomenon is a set of contradictory beliefs about wealth and power found in many cultures and historical periods. Consider the German legend of Faust, based on a 16th-century German alchemist. According to the legend, Faust, a bored and depressed scholar, makes a pact with the devil through the devil's emissary, Mephistopheles. The deal is that Mephistopheles will help Faust gain access to all worldly pleasures, including sex, power, and knowledge. In return, Faust will be required to turn his soul over to the devil after several years.

Forms of this **Faustian bargain** have emerged in many other parts of the world, particularly as societies are drawn into new forms of wealth and inequality in the global economy. For instance, anthropologist Michael Taussig (1980) conducted research on beliefs about the devil among people working in the sugar plantations of Colombia and the tin mines of Bolivia. Some wage laborers on sugar plantations were said to enter into contracts with the devil to increase their productivity, helping them make fast money. Most often, they bought flashy clothes and liquor with their newfound wealth but could not establish enduring prosperity. Taussig describes how workers in the Bolivian tin mines created a shrine to the devil to ensure their safety and help them find rich tin deposits. Taussig argues that people in peasant farming societies feel a sense of unease about capitalist forms of work, wealth, and inequality. To agrarian peoples steeped in communal values, it seems unfair that some laborers become wealthy while others work just as hard and fail. And yet, young people are drawn in by the compelling allure of money and commodities associated with labor in the globalized capitalist economy. According to Taussig, this conflicted feeling of unease gives rise to widespread beliefs about serving the devil for temporary gains.

FIGURE 15.8 Poster for the 1926 film *Faust*, directed by F. W. Murnau and based on German writer Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's telling of a German folktale. According to the legend, Faust makes a pact with the devil to gain access to worldly pleasures in return for his soul. As globalization spreads access to wealth and material goods around the world, scholars have observed the spread of stories about people serving the devil for temporary gains. (credit: Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, UFA/Wikimedia Commons, Public Domain)

For some young people around the world, digital media have provided paths to astonishing success and wealth, often through global relations and transactions. While new forms of digital trade and technological innovation may provide some well-educated and well-connected elites with a means of getting rich, the vast majority of young people in both wealthy and poorer countries are largely left out of the opportunities of the digital economy. Sakawa may seem like a disturbing form of digital delinquency to many Ghanaians and foreigners alike, but it dramatizes the widespread sense of unfairness and inequality in Ghanaian society as a whole. The phenomenon of sakawa suggests that disadvantaged groups must combine supernatural forms of power with their computer and social skills in order to get ahead. Hard work alone is never enough. The unfairness of this situation is symbolized by the ultimate doom faced by many sakawa scammers: unable or unwilling to keep up with the demands of their supernatural masters, they fall ill and die.

Exploring how forms of media intersect with economic, political, and religious realms as well as gender, ethnicity, and identity, anthropologists take a holistic approach to mass media. Studying photography, news media, broadcasting, and digital media, anthropologists discover the cultural contexts of media production and reception as well as new forms of sociality and transaction. As media technologies become more deeply embedded in people's lives and instrumental to social relationships and communities, the holistic lens of anthropology is key to understanding the profound sociocultural changes brought about by media innovations.

MINI-FIELDWORK ACTIVITY

Make a Photographic Documentary

Create a photographic documentary of a social event, such as a party, meeting, class, or other community

gathering. Before the event, make a list of shots necessary to show what's really going on at the event. What people should you photograph? What actions should be depicted? What is socially significant about the event, and how can you convey that meaning through photos? As you prepare your final product, consider how the photos should be presented. Should they be altered or edited in any way after you take them? How should they be organized? Should they be presented in the order you took them or in some other order?

Suggested Readings

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Key Terms

"the medium is the message" the notion that each genre of media has its own set of features that suggest certain uses and types of content.
community radio radio stations that are community owned and operated, staffed by groups of professionals and volunteers.
cosmopolitanism worldly knowledge and sophistication, often associated with involvement in global forms of media.
ethnographic film the use of film in ethnographic research, either as a method, a record, or a means of reporting on anthropological fieldwork.
Faustian bargain the idea that a person can engage in evil supernatural activities in order to gain access to worldly desires such as wealth, sex, and/or knowledge.
imperial gaze a set of conventions for how people in imperial or colonizing societies view the people and landscapes of subjugated territories.
independent media forms of print and broadcast media that are privately owned.
Indigenous media the use of media by Indigenous peoples for community identity, cultural representation, and activism.
male gaze a set of conventions for how men look at women.
mass media mechanically reproduced forms of communication targeting large audiences.
media tools for storing and sharing information.
media ideologies sets of ideas about the uses and functions of a particular genre of media.
public sphere a domain of social life in which people represent, learn about, and discuss the important issues of the day.
sakawa magically enhanced Internet fraud, mainly targeting foreigners.
sociality participation in social relations; how people construct and maintain their personal and group relationships.
soli short for *solidarity*; a small sum of money given by news sources to journalists at the end of an assignment in Ghana.
state media forms of print and broadcast media that are financially supported by the state and subject to government control.
technophilia the love of technology; characteristic of societies and eras of increasing technological innovation and its incorporation into everyday life.
the gaze a specific mode of looking at images shaped by the identities of viewer and viewed.
visual anthropology the use of visual media as a method of research or its study as a topic of research.
voyeuristic describes a gaze aimed at people who do not know they are being viewed.

Summary

Anthropologists use long-term ethnographic fieldwork and holistic perspectives to study media genres such as photography, film, radio, television, and digital media. In visual anthropology, gaze theory is used to think about the relationship between viewers and the people depicted in photographs, particularly in terms of gender, power, and cultural identity. Anthropologists studying news media focus on the construction of national public spheres of official ideology and political contest. Radio is often used by communities for more participatory and community-based forms of communication. Many anthropologists study how soap operas and other television programs promote forms of ethnicity, gender, and nationalism. Digital media construct entirely new forms of sociality, including illicit shadow forms of impersonation and scamming such as sakawa.

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Can you think of any genres of mass media not covered in this chapter? How could an anthropologist conduct research on those topics? What might be the focus of the research? What might be the challenges?
2. Do you take photographs to document your day-to-day life? If so, who constitutes the audience for these photos? What messages are you conveying by sharing images with others or viewing your own images? How does taking a photo influence the way you remember an experience?
3. Select a news story from the front page of a newspaper or the website of a national news organization. Why is this story on the front page? What techniques make the story appear to be true? What perspectives or facts are left out of the story? Does that make the story false? Are there different versions of truth?
4. What is your favorite television program? What notions of identity and sociality are depicted in

the show? Consider gender, race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, and nationalism. How might the show affect the way you view yourself and your community?

5. What social relationships in your life are made possible and/or enhanced by the use of digital media? Would you have the same sorts of friends and/or romantic relationships without digital interaction? How would your relationships be different without digital media?

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CHAPTER 16
Art, Music, and Sport

Figure 16.1 The Colosseum in Rome played a role similar to a professional football stadium today. Here, tens of thousands of Romans gathered to view competitions that not only entertained but also contributed to a sense of belonging and identity. (credit: "Colosseum" by Rennett Stowe/flickr, CC BY 2.0)

CHAPTER OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION Think about the last concert or sporting event that you attended, observed on television, or watched on social media. What was the last piece of art that you saw in person, online, or on social media? Did you consider that your experience was likely a culmination of tens of thousands of years of human evolution? Would you consider graffiti on the sides of train cars to be art? Is a pickup game of football in the neighborhood sport? Figure 16.1 depicts a famous structure connected to sport that is now more often viewed as an art object—the Colosseum of Rome. The Colosseum served a role in ancient Roman society similar to an NFL (National Football League) stadium in contemporary American culture. Here gladiators battled animals such as lions and bears for the entertainment of a crowd of tens of thousands made up of all levels of Roman society.

As you read about the sociocultural diversity in art, music, and sports highlighted in this chapter, remember the central narrative of anthropology: *Human beings have developed flexible biological and social features that have worked together in a wide variety of environmental and historical conditions to produce a diversity of cultures*. Art, music, and sports have been and continue to be important elements of every culture on earth,

helping to create a sense of collective identity and helping societies to hold together. Art, music, and sports both reflect the sociocultural diversity found around the world and have played roles in effecting cultural change. Art, music, and sports have shaped the evolution of societies, and the evolution of a societies has influenced art, music, and sports in turn. As you read this chapter, consider your own experiences with art, music, and sport. Consider what you are familiar with and what you appreciate. Reflect also on the art, music, and sport in your society that are not particularly interested in or moved by. Where do these preferences come from? To what degree are they individual and to what degree do they reflect connections to your culture and to the subcultures within it?

16.1 Anthropology of the Arts

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Describe the anthropological approach to understanding art.
- Provide three examples of material artifacts of art.
- Identify forms of prehistoric art and describe how anthropologists have interpreted those forms.
- Provide two examples of purposes that art serves in a society.
- Define visual anthropology and describe its role in understanding culture.
- Describe the relationship between visual representation and cultural expression and memory.
- Provide three examples of body art and describe the cultural meaning of each.

The anthropology of the arts can include various approaches to interpreting art forms, including analyses of the symbolic meanings represented, the mediums through which art is disseminated, and even how the art is manufactured. Art is strongly anchored in the human experience.

How Do Anthropologists Approach Art?

You might be asking yourself, How does art reflect or guide the study of anthropology? The simple answer is that **art** is created by humans. While definitions of art vary and have historically been narrowly construed to fit within a Western understanding of the term (Morphy and Perkins 2006), a constant element has been the intentional application of imagination, creativity, and skill. Art is created with intent.

Art is a representation of the human experience, and anthropologists approach the study of art the same way they do any other aspect of human existence. Anthropologists take a holistic approach to any given topic, situating that topic among the broader context of a culture—its "language, environment, economy, religion, family life, governance and so on" (Plattner 2003, 15). All of these details are implicitly and inextricably embedded in the products of a culture, which cannot be fully understood and appreciated without some awareness of them. This is particularly important in regard to the arts, which rely so heavily on a shared cultural vocabulary. As Stuart Plattner (2003) asserts:

> Anthropologists think that artistic production . . . should be looked upon, not simply as applied aesthetics, but as an activity embedded in an *art world*, a complex set of social relationships. . . . It is wrong to focus on the unique art object, and ignore the complex set of human relationships which contributed to its creation. (15)

Anthropology lends itself to examining both the *how* and the *why* of the arts. Art is studied by anthropologists through methods such as observation, interviews, focus groups, and site assessments. Anthropological study of art includes ethnographic studies as well as inquiries in physical anthropology and archaeology (e.g., Upper Paleolithic cave paintings, Aboriginal rock paintings, etc.). Consider the work that is required to analyze an artistic creation or sporting event through these anthropological techniques. Such work could include unearthing and evaluating artifacts of ancient societies, interviewing theatrical performers, or attending a game or match. The study of art, music, and sports requires the same holistic, wide-ranging approach as do all other anthropological studies.

What is art? Who defines it? What is the difference, if any, between a cultural practice and a piece of artwork? These are all valid questions to consider when exploring the arts with the goal of better understanding human

cultures. The modern understanding of art began in the 18th century, when the word *art* shifted from referring to any specialized skill (e.g., art of gardening) to referencing the *fine arts* (Kristeller 1990). Anthropologists consider that art has historical, economic, and aesthetic dimensions. Consider painters in ancient Roman times, who often had patrons of their work who supported their livelihoods. It could be said that such painters were people of lesser means; however, with a patron's support, they could earn a wage for expressing their talents. And in aesthetic terms, art provides a representation of what is considered beautiful within a certain cultural context.

The subfield of anthropological archaeology has approached the study of arts from its own specific perspectives. Archaeologists cannot observe how an art object was created or used and are unable to ask its creators or consumers the types of ethnographic questions that other cultural anthropologists may rely on. Archaeologists possess specialized knowledge pertaining to the sociohistorical and cultural contexts of early art. Their research on these art pieces provides other anthropologists with a starting point for analyzing older art. It also provides them with a more well-rounded understanding of the functionality and purposes of early art.

Material artifacts of art can include many of the things people interact with at home, work, or school. These include artifacts that are the results of various people's representations of the world, such as the architecture of the building one lives in or a favorite coffee shop. They can also be relics from ancient times, such as weapons, tools, and cave drawings. These relics can be found in the research and reports that art historians, anthropologists and archaeologists use to analyze the symbolic and cultural meaning of art. **Iconographic study** is the study of the visual images, symbols, or modes of representation collectively associated with a person, cult, or movement. Art is an expressive behavior that encompasses and expresses cultural worldviews, social status and hierarchy, myth, and cosmology.

FIGURE 16.2 These baskets, created by the Yokuts people of Central California and photographed by Edward Curtis, are one of many types of material artifacts of art that anthropologists rely upon when attempting to understand culture. (credit: "Baskets in the Painted Cave—Yokuts" by Edward S. Curtis/Library of Congress, Public Domain)

Studying Prehistoric Art

Much of what anthropologists consider prehistoric art consists of artifacts and materials used to facilitate the work necessary to sustain life. It also includes cave paintings created tens of thousands of years ago. Examples of such cave paintings are the Upper Paleolithic cave art dated to 40,000 to 64,000 years ago, which features stenciled figures of animals and artifacts, though not usually humans.

FIGURE 16.3 These prehistoric cave drawings are located in the Magura cave in Bulgaria. While cave drawings typically focus on large animals such as cave bears, horses, and bison, the drawings in the Magura cave include both humans and animals, and provide information about the solar calendar, religious festivals and other customs. (credit: "Prehistoric drawings in the Magura cave, Bulgaria" by Nk/Wikimedia Commons, Public Domain)

This rock art, often called cave art, served as a medium to archive the human experience, tell a story, and depict how prehistoric peoples saw the world around them. Figure 16.3 above demonstrates how someone saw animals that were being hunted—and, unusually for this type of art, the people doing the hunting. These drawings served as a communication tool, historical archive, and artistic representation of a period of time and the human experience of the people who were there.

Interpreting Art

Visual art can be viewed as important evidence in attempting to understand a culture. Throughout time, visual art has been used to convey the human experiences of a vast range of cultures. This art provides modern anthropologists with valuable perspectives on other cultures and other times that could be hard to gain access to through other means. The image of the Kangxi emperor in Figure 16.4 conveys pride, wealth, and strength, characteristics that this artist connects to the China's Qing dynasty, depicting the emperor as its representative. This image articulates the successes of this culture at that particular point in history. Detailed analysis of works of art can contribute to the sophistication with which anthropologists understand both individual cultures and the shifting nature of human cultures in general.

FIGURE 16.4 This painting of a Kangxi emperor is an expression of the wealth and strength of the Qing dynasty. (credit: "Armoured Kangxi Emperor" by Author of Qing Dynasty/Originally from sina.com/Wikimedia Commons, Public Domain)

Spiritual Art

Other forms of visual art are significant to spiritual and sociocultural practices and beliefs. One example is the mandala, a symbolic diagram consisting of various geometric patterns that represents the universe. Mandalas are a cultural practice in Tibet, India, Nepal, China, Japan, and Indonesia (Tucci [1961] 2001) and can be traced back to the fourth century CE. Typically square or circular in shape, they are used in Hinduism and Buddhism to focus attention during meditation.

One significant variation on the mandala is the sand mandala, a beautiful arrangement of colored sand that originated in India and is now a Tibetan Buddhist tradition. Specially trained Buddhist monks create elaborate patterns with the sand, beginning in the middle of the diagram and using concentric circles to work their way to the edge. Once constructed, the sand mandalas are then ritualistically destroyed in recognition of the Buddhist doctrine of impermanence and the transitory nature of existence.

Visual Anthropology

Visual anthropology is a subfield of anthropology and itself a form of anthropological inquiry. It includes the study of art as represented in photography and film. The field largely arose with the invention of the camera, as anthropologists started to document Indigenous groups of the time on film. Some of the best-known figures in the field of visual anthropology are Edward Curtis, whose images of Native Americans are discussed in detail in Chapter 19: Indigenous Anthropology, and Robert Flaherty, whose 1922 film *Nanook of the North* is frequently shown in introductory anthropology courses as an early example of documentary filmmaking.

While visual anthropology is often confused with ethnographic film, tfilm representations are only a small part of what the subfield encompasses. Visual anthropology is the study of all visual representations produced by human cultures, including dances, plays, and collections of art, from the beginning of time. In recent times, it has become a standard practice to use visual arts to articulate one's feelings, thoughts, and interpretations of things seen, heard, and witnessed. Many cultures practice visual arts and use them in a variety of scenarios. They may be used to capture a certain mood, a cultural trend, or a historical event.

As mentioned above, film and photography played a major role in the development of visual anthropology as a field. Film can be used to capture images of art, such as cave paintings, sculptures from Roman times, or modern-day theater. Further, film itself has become an important form of art. Film provides an artistic representation of the human experience as seen by its directors, performers, editors, and all who contributed to its development.

The field of visual anthropology has had a significant impact on how anthropologists look at art. It also has become a driving force in how anthropologists view **sociodemographic** evolution, or the evolution of human societies with respect to combinations of social (https://openstax.org/r/dictionarysocial) and demographic factors. The visual anthropology of art transcends generations, centuries, cultures, and other delineating categorical definitions. Consider Figure 16.5, which depicts tourists in the French Louvre, crowding around and photographing Leonardo da Vinci's famous painting the *Mona Lisa*. This photograph portrays the dimensions and complexity of the anthropology of art. It transcends the time of the *Mona Lisa* and is itself an expression of the human experience in a more recent time, including how humans relate to visual artifacts from an older time in history.

Because of its age, the *Mona Lisa* image is in the public domain and can be copied and reproduced anywhere. The painting has become the subject of many parodies or memes. A **meme** is an image, video, piece of text, etc., typically humorous in nature, that is copied and spread rapidly by internet users, often with slight variations. The prolific production of memes of the *Mona Lisa* has kept the image relevant in society over a long period of time. Read more on the memes that have been created of the *Mona Lisa* here. Have We Over-Hyped the Mona Lisa? (https://openstax.org/r/overhyped-monalisa)

FIGURE 16.5 The *Mona Lisa* is five centuries old and still captures the imagination. (credit: "Mona Lisa" by Bradley Eldridge/Wikimedia Commons, CC BY 2.0)

The Appreciation of Art

Neuropsychologist Dahlia Zaidel has proposed that people's appreciation of aesthetics stems from their cognitive and affective processes. This simply means that people are attracted to art on the basis of preexisting conditions and that their interest in art evolves through time as they have new experiences, develop appreciation for new things, and otherwise mature as humans.

Appreciation of art is a biological and neurological response. People's individual perspectives are innately grounded in biology and nature and neurology and nurturing. Think about someone you find attractive and the attributes of theirs that you find beauty in, or consider the last piece of clothing you bought because you liked how it fit, how it looked, or how others appreciated it. Attraction is a response based on a myriad of biological attributes that each individual person possesses and has since birth. These are anchored in laws of attraction. Humanity's attraction to art is as biologically founded as attraction to other things (Zaidel et al. 2013). Perhaps this is why some people like various types of art from different time periods that depict the human experience.

Pottery

Traced back to the Neolithic period, pottery is considered one of the oldest inventions of humankind. Pottery is an art form created by many cultures for both aesthetic and functional purposes, including storing and cooking foods, carbonization (the formation of carbon from organic matter), and ritualistic practices. It has long been an important artifact type in archaeology. Pottery is an example of a practical object that also contains features of artistic beauty. One example is the Acoma pottery created by the Pueblo culture. Acoma pottery is functional and was not created purely as what we would now consider to be works of art. However, the pottery itself is a material art. Much can be learned about a culture by analyzing both the functionality of a particular piece or style of pottery and the imagery or stories depicted within its details and designs. Pottery, such as the 20,000-year-old pottery pieces found in ancient China depicted in Figure 16.6, has been crucial to understanding cultural history. The creation of pottery merges human knowledge and experiences, including artistic resources, emerging technological processes, and the needs of a population at a given time (P. M. Rice 2015).

FIGURE 16.6 These pottery fragments were found in a cave in southern China and have been dated to 20,000 years ago. Pottery is viewed by anthropologists as both functional object and artistic expression. (credit: "Ancient Pottery" by Gary Todd/flickr, Public Domain)

Though it serves a functional purpose, pottery throughout history has often been adorned with decoration, color, and other aesthetically attractive features. Decorated pottery is assigned a high value in many cultures, with people paying large sums of money for especially decorative pieces.

Body Art

Various forms of body art are a foundational form of expression in cultures all over the world. All cultures decorate and modify the human body in some way, whether temporarily or permanently. Anthropological frameworks can be used to understand body art as both a form of visual art and a cultural tradition.

Tattooing is a form of body art that has been practiced for thousands of years. *Tattoo* is a Polynesian term. Polynesian tribes and people used tattoos to establish identity, personality, and status. The Maori, an Indigenous Polynesian people of New Zealand, have traditionally used tattoos as an expression of identity and cultural affiliation. Examples of this can also be found in the Tonga and Samoa warrior cultures, in which specific tattoo designs and placement on the body were used to demonstrate a warrior's affiliation with a particular group of elite warriors. In the mid-20th century, American sailors used tattoos to represent personal interests, aspects of their identity, and group affiliation. Such tattoos might include representations of a unit mascot, places individuals have visited, or things they found beauty in.

FIGURE 16.7 One American sailor tattoos another aboard a ship during World War II. Tattooing is widely practiced by cultures around the world to express both personal and group identity. (credit: "Two sailors aboard the American battleship USS New Jersey in 1944" by Fenno Jacobs. Department of Defense. Department of the Navy. Naval Photographic Center/National Archives and Records Administration/Wikimedia Commons, Public Domain)

There is clear evidence of the practice of modifying the body with markings dating as far back as 5,300 to 3,000 years ago (Deter-Wolf et al. 2016; Shishlina, Belkevich, and Usachuk 2013). Such markings are still practiced by some of these same cultures today, such as the Maori people. Ötzi, a naturally mummified man found in the Ötzal Alps whose death has been dated to around 3250 BCE, is the first known tattooed human. His tattoos were of lines and crosses across his body. They are believed to have been made by creating incisions in the skin and rubbing charcoal into the incisions.

Tattooing can be a way for individuals to express membership in a larger community. Not only are communities formed around having body art, but some may obtain tattoos as a mark of belonging to a certain community (e.g., tattoos of a cross as a symbol of the Christian faith). Tattoos in recent decades have come to serve many purposes, including memorializing loved ones, expressing aesthetic tastes, depicting personal histories, expressing emotions or feelings, and symbolizing rebellion (Dey and Das 2017).

A modified approach to the classic tattoo can be found in the art of scarification. **Scarification** is the branding, burning, or etching of designs into the skin. Scarification marks often identify someone as being affiliated with subcultures or other groups. The practice is also used to represent individual growth or the growth and development of a group or subset of a society.

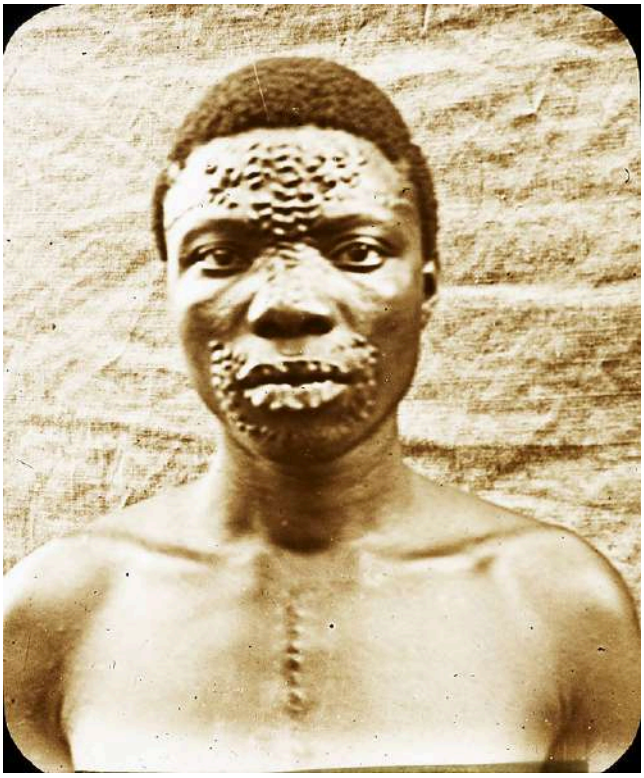

FIGURE 16.8 The patterned scarification visible on the face of this man was formed through the intentional creation and controlled healing of wounds. This image was taken in what was then the Belgian Congo by Christian missionaries in the early twentieth century. Scarification has been used by many cultures to mark group identity. (credit: "Man with Scarification Patterns, Congo, ca. 1900-1915" by Unknown/USC Digital Library/Wikimedia Commons, Public Domain)

Makeup has been an expression of visual art since prehistoric times. It is used to enhance beauty, cover up flaws, and represent cultural ideals of what beauty is and should be. It is often a sociocultural delineation of wealth and success. Piercings are used for many of the same reasons and have been found in the earliest of ancient African mummies. They may be seen as an expression of individuality or of identity and affiliation.

Another example of body art is **body painting**. In some cultures, body painting is limited to the face, while others cover their entire bodies. The painting of the whole body is a common practice among Indigenous Australian peoples (Figure 16.9). The purposes of this type of body art include, but are not limited to, subcultural identification and announcements of social status and accomplishments. The painting can be temporary or semipermanent, achieved through various types of paints and stains. Body painting follows uniform patterns and styles in some cultures and is independently driven in others. The specific designs might reveal an individual's position within their family, membership in a group, social position, tribal identity, and even precise ancestral history (Layton 1989).

FIGURE 16.9 These Aboriginal Australians have adorned their torsos with traditional body paint utilizing various conventions and motifs. (credit: "Aborigines on Palm Island, Qld - 1930s Perhaps" by Aussie~mobs/flickr, Public Domain)

Henna art is another example of body painting. Henna paint is derived from crushed, milled, and sifted henna leaves. It is applied directly on the skin in intricate designs that leave a red or orange stain once the paint is removed. Henna body art is used in various cultures of North Africa, Somalia, Southeast Asia, and the Indian subcontinent to adorn the hands and sometimes the feet of young women on special occasions, such as weddings and religious celebrations such as Eid al-Fitr (Chairunnisa and Solihat 2019). During weddings, women use henna to articulate cultural, familial, and religious affiliations. It is also used to accentuate the beauty of the bride and as a testament to the status of the family she is coming from and of the one she is marrying into.

FIGURE 16.10 The elaborate patterns on these women's arms are created using henna paste. After giving the paste time to stain the skin, it is washed away. The arm on the left shows the paste before washing, the arm of the woman on the right shows the color once the paste is removed. (credit: "Henna" by Rovich/500px/Wikimedia Commons, CC BY 3.0)

The grooming of hair is also a culturally significant practice in societies throughout the world. The way one styles or displays their hair can symbolize many things, including membership in a religious sect, racial affiliation, and alignment with pop cultural trends. Hair also has been seen as an indicator of social status. From an evolutionary perspective, the quality and amount of hair one has indicates robustness and has contributed to mate selection and group identification. Hairstyles, hair volume, and hair coverings all have contributed to cultural identity and have been viewed as artistic representations of the lived experiences of people in myriad cultures and times. In some traditional Muslim cultures, hair is concealed by headscarves called hijabs. This representation of modesty has become an icon of Middle Eastern tradition and culture.

Hairstyles are especially significant in African and African diasporic cultures. Hair played a significant role in ancient African civilizations, used to symbolize familial background, social status, tribal belonging, marital status, and spirituality. Hair-grooming practices, particularly time-intensive practices such as getting one's hair braided, are often social activities.

16.2 Anthropology of Music

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Define ethnomusicology.
- Describe evidence of musical instruments in prehistory.
- Articulate the importance of sociocultural context to the understanding of music.
- Describe how music can form the basis of subculture and community.
- Evaluate the potential of music to impact processes of social change.
- Describe how cultural appropriation of music is related to social inequality and power.

Music

Music is found in wide-ranging settings and format, including chants, musicals, live performances, recorded performances, and spiritual rituals. In prehistoric times, music was used to communicate, to tell the stories of people and express important elements of cultures. Music articulates the human experience, focusing on what people want to remember about their history and what they desire for the future. It has been used to heal, to demonstrate power, and to archive the experiences of people. Present-day music is an extension and an evolution of the music that has come before. It is a medium that represents the depths of time, culture, and history. Prehistoric musical instruments, called *music artifacts* in anthropology, include woodwinds and percussion instruments of ancient nomadic tribes. These instruments began as rudimentary music artifacts and evolved into more sophisticated technological equipment invented and formed for the exclusive purpose of creating music.

Ethnomusicology

Someone who studies music from a global perspective, as a social practice, and through ethnographic field work is called an ethnomusicologist. The Society for Ethnomusicology defines ethnomusicology as "the study of music in its social and cultural contexts" (n.d.). Ethnomusicology is complex, requiring the work of many scientific disciplines. It requires study of many geographic areas, with a focus on the social practice of music and the human experience. Ethnomusicology is interdisciplinary, with a close relation to cultural anthropology. It is sometimes described as a historical research approach to understanding the cultures of people through their music. One well-known ethnomusicologist was Frances Densmore, who focused on the study of Native American music and culture.

FIGURE 16.11 Frances Densmore was an American anthropologist and ethnographer. This image from 1916 shows her with Blackfoot chief, Mountain Chief. During this session, Mountain Chief listened to a song Densmore had recorded and interpreted it for her in Plains Indian Sign Language. (credit: "Piegan Indian, Mountain Chief, Listening to Recording with Ethnologist Frances Densmore" by National Photo Company/Library of Congress, Public Domain)

Musical Instruments in Prehistory

The field of ethnomusicology focuses on all aspects of music, including its genre, its message, the artist(s) who created it, and the instruments they used to do so. Have you ever considered why a particular musical instrument was created? Who made it? Why did they make it? What did they want it to do? How was it used? How did they dream up the design? Emily Brown (2005), formerly of the US National Park Service, studied the development of musical instruments in Ancestral Puebloan sites. Her study yielded insights into the types of instruments created. These included percussion and woodwind flutes that were used to create music culturally centric to the Puebloan people. Her study also yielded great insight into the structural hierarchy of those entrusted to manufacture music-making instruments. Not too dissimilar to today's trade apprenticeships and master programs found in construction, Ancestral Puebloan people established a system of passing down the construction techniques central to creating musical instruments, ensuring that the knowledge would be carried on by future generations. Brown's study connected music instruments to politics, music, social status, and social experiences.

The Structure and Function of Music in Different Societies

Music is grounded in the human experience. It is a theatrical expression of its creator's thoughts and perceptions. The structure of music has evolved along with the experiences of the humans who created it. Examples of this can be found in the early 1800s hymns of Choctaw tribes. These hymns provide an artistic expression of traumatic experiences, referring to a time when the Choctaw people were removed from their homelands and relocated to reservation lands by the US government. They speak of both individual and collective experiences as these peoples made the arduous journey to their new locations. The songs speak about broken promises, the journey, and the fate of their people.

FIGURE 16.12 This trading card, published by the National Parks Service, commemorates the forced journey of the Choctaw people to reservation lands, commonly known as the Trail of Tears. The Choctaw people have commemorated this same journey in hymns. (credit: "Trail of Tears for the Creek People" by TradingCardsNPS/flickr, CC BY 2.0)

For enslaved people, music was a mechanism of emotional escape from difficult situations as well as a means of communicating with those speaking different languages during the Middle Passage, the journey from Africa to locations of forced labor. One of the most iconic spirituals, or songs for survival, is "Go Down Moses." Harriet Tubman, the legendary Underground Railroad conductor, said that she used this spiritual as a way to signal to those who were enslaved in the area who she wanted to help escape to freedom (Bradford [1886] 1995). The song ostensibly speaks about the experience of the Israelites enslaved by the Egyptians in ancient times. For enslaved Black people in America, the song spoke directly to their own longing for freedom. The chorus of "Go Down Moses" is as follows:

> Go down, Moses,
> Way down in Egypt's land.
> Tell ol' Pharaoh,
> Let my people go.
> Thus saith the Lord, bold Moses said,
> Let my people go,
> If not, I'll smite your firstborn dead,
> Let my people go.

Listen to this song on the Library of Congress website (https://openstax.org/r/locgovjukebox).

Numerous populations have utilized music as a means of resistance. During the civil rights movement of the 20th century, Black artists such as Nina Simone, Aretha Franklin, and Sam Cooke used their music as a way to challenge structural inequity. Aretha Franklin, a Black singer, songwriter, and pianist, wrote and performed music anchored in the Black church that came to represent Black American culture. She achieved national and international fame for her rich voice and heartfelt performances, and she was able to use her artistic talents to bring a message of both hope and resistance to her audience. Her songs spoke to both where people were and where they wanted to be.

Sam Cooke was an American singer who was given the nickname "King of Soul" by his fans and those in the music industry. Like many, he started out singing in church, but eventually his music and passion evolved to secular music. He is credited with having significant influence on the civil rights movement, and his music often explored themes of oppression and fighting for a cause. The music of his first band, Soul Stirrers, focused on stirring the listener's soul to engage in the movement for racial equality.

FIGURE 16.13 Sam Cooke's performance outfit and instruments are on display in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in Cleveland, Ohio. The music of Sam Cooke had considerable influence on the Civil Rights movement. (credit: "Sam Cooke's Outfit" by Steven Miller/flickr, CC BY 2.0)

Perhaps no artist in recent times is better known for using music as a catalyst for social change than Bob Dylan. Dylan was a 1960s-era musical artist who spoke to many cultures and generations about injustice and the need for inclusion and change. His 1964 song "The Times They Are a-Changin'" urged politicians and voters to support the civil rights movement. He was also well known for his opposition to the Vietnam War. His music may have very well changed the course of history, given his influence on his fans' thoughts, perspectives, and attitudes toward inclusion (Ray 2017).

FIGURE 16.14 American musician and songwriter Bob Dylan popularized many protest songs, including 1964's "The Times They Are a-Changin'." (credit: "Bob Dylan" by F. Antolín Hernández/flickr, CC BY 2.0)

PROFILES IN ANTHROPOLOGY

Zora Neale Hurston
1861–1960

FIGURE 16.15 In this image, Zora Neale Hurston exuberantly plays a traditional drum. (credit: "Zora Hurston, Half-Length Portrait, Standing, Facing Slightly Left, Beating the Hountar, or Mama Drum" by New York World-Telegram & Sun staff photographer/Library of Congress, Public Domain)

Personal History: Zora Neale Hurston was a Black American anthropologist, author, and filmmaker. She was born in Notasulga, Alabama, to a sharecropper turned carpenter and a former schoolteacher. All of her grandparents were born enslaved. Hurston moved to Eatonville, Florida, an all-Black town, in 1892, at the age of two. She often referenced Eatonville as her home, as she had no recollection of her time in Alabama. She lived in Eatonville until 1904, when her mother passed. At the time, Eatonville was a well-established Black community with a booming economy. According to multiple accounts, Hurston was never indoctrinated into feeling racial inferiority. While she was a resident, her father was elected mayor of the town. All the shop owners and government officials were also Black American elites. In adulthood, Huston often used Eatonville as the setting of her stories.

Huston left Eatonville due to a poor relationship with her stepmother. She enrolled in classes at Morgan College in Maryland, lying about her age of 26 to be eligible for a free high school education. She graduated in 1918 and attended Howard University, a historically Black university in Washington, DC, before transferring to Barnard College at Columbia University. At Barnard, Hurston studied under Franz Boas as an undergraduate and graduate student. She also worked with other foundational anthropologists, including Ruth Benedict and Margaret Mead.

Area of Anthropology: In addition to her time in academia, Hurston was a central figure in the Harlem Renaissance as a literary artist, working closely with Langston Hughes, among other writers. She was a pivotal literary artist whose work directly reflected the trials, tribulations, and successes of Black American communities and subsocieties that were often overlooked or exoticized (Jones 2009).

Hurston was a cultural anthropologist who was passionate about southern American and Caribbean cultural practices. She spent significant time in these geographical areas, immersing herself in the diverse cultures of Black people in the American South and the Caribbean.

Accomplishments in the Field: One of Hurston's most notable anthropological works is *Mules and Men* (1935), based on ethnographic research she conducted in lumber camps in north Florida. One focus of this work was the power dynamics between the White men who were in charge and the Black women laborers, some of whom the men took as concubines. In addition to this work, Hurston studied Black American song traditions and their relationship to the music of enslavement and to the musical traditions of pre–Middle Passage Africans.

Importance of Her Work: Hurston not only studied human society and culture as an anthropologist but was also an active participant in the arts. She was a central figure in the Harlem Renaissance, which was a flowering of Black culture centered in the Harlem neighborhood of New York City. Her most popular novel is *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937; Carby 2008). Her specific anthropological and ethnographic research focus areas were Black American and Caribbean folklore. She also worked for the Federal Writer's Project, part of the Works Progress Administration, as a writer and folklorist. Hurston is now an iconic figure for the Association of Black Anthropologists and several Black anthropological studies journals.

The Importance of Sociocultural Context in Understanding Music

Ethnomusicologist Patricia Campbell (2011) proposes that children's perspectives on musical interests are derived from their family, community, and environment. How did you learn about music you liked? What did your parents listen to, and what do you listen to? While you may have learned about and grown to like other music as you aged, your appreciation for music is founded in the sociocultural environment that you were raised in. Imagine growing up in a family that only listened to Bansuri bamboo flute music. Would you even know, for example, what rap music is?

Music as a Basis for Subculture and Community

The affiliation of music with identity became a common topic of inquiry in ethnomusicology in the 1980s, perhaps prompted by the music subcultures of the 1970s that arose among groups of people who did not identify with mainstream norms, values, or ideals. Among the music subcultures that emerged during that time was the punk subculture (Moran 2010). Though it was often seen as no more than youthful rebellion, the punk subculture formed its own community, values, and ideals founded in a do-it-yourself, or DIY, ethos. This can be found in the lyrics, music, and performances of punk groups such as the Ramones and the Clash, as well as more recent pop-influenced groups such as Green Day and Blink-182. The lyrics tell stories of needing to break from common ideals and values in order to think and do for oneself.

FIGURE 16.16 The rock band Green Day is one of many musical groups connected to specific subcultures in contemporary culture. (credit: "Green Day Concert Stage (Montreal) - Green Day Is Ever Green" by Anirudh Koul/ flickr, CC BY 2.0)

Cultural Appropriation

Cultural practices important to communities are often integrated into the fabric of each person's identity. **Cultural appropriation** is defined as the improper or disrespectful use of a meaningful element of a culture or identity outside of its intended cultural context by someone who is not a part of that culture or identity (Young 2008). The act of cultural appropriation by dominant cultures threatens to erase remaining parts of a culture that may already be jeopardized. Cultural appropriation is tied to social inequity in that it involves a socially dominant group using the culture of a marginalized group for exploitative or capitalist gain. The cultural significance of the appropriated elements is lost. While the act of cultural appropriation is centuries old, there has been a renewed call from marginalized communities in recent years to understand how and why this practice is harmful.

Wesley Morris (2019) wrote an article for the *New York Times*' 1619 Project regarding the mass appropriation of Black music. Morris noted instances of appropriation by artists such as Steely Dan, Eminem, and Amy Winehouse, all White American or British music superstars. Musical appropriation is the use of one genre's musical contributions in other music that is not of the same genre, style, or culture. The power of Black music to articulate the history, struggles, and marginalization of Black people has appealed to other social groups as well, many of them drawn to the ability of this music to communicate its message with clarity and boldness. Morris also discusses how, more recently, the appropriation of Black lyrics, songs, and musical presentation styles has become a method of addressing the need for integration and integrated culture. This can be seen in Black artist Lil Nas X's 2019 remix of his hit song "Old Town Road," for which he teamed up with White country musician Billy Ray Cyrus to perform a duet. The song itself is a blending of cultures, musical and racial, and offers a social contribution to evolving efforts at inclusion.

16.3 An Anthropological View of Sport throughout Time

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Describe the anthropology of sports.
- Explain how sports are a form of performance.
- Identify the role that sports can play for young people.

Sports are also deeply intertwined with the human experience. The anthropology of sports is a rapidly developing field that includes specialties such as physiological anthropology and human growth and development. Sports can be quite diverse; picture a Roman gladiator, a modern-day European football (soccer) player, and an ancient or recent Olympic competitor. Another example of a sport is Trobriand cricket, a bat-

and-ball game played by Trobriand Islanders that had evolved considerably since its introduction by Christian missionaries at the turn of the 20th century. Sports are expressions of passions and reflections of the human experience. They have been practiced by many cultures throughout time and across the globe. This section will specifically focus on how sports have impacted human culture and how human culture has impacted sports in turn. It will consider the historical foundation of the culture of sports and briefly analyze the way people interact with sports today, examining how human culture and societal practices are influenced by not only individual athletes but also social structures.

The Anthropology of Sports

Anthropologists understand sports as a cultural performance. The term **performance** can describe a plethora of actions, including any that are artful, active, or competitive—and sometimes some combination of all of these. Anthropologist Ajeet Jaiswal (2019) describes the anthropology of sports as the study of human growth and development. If one conceives of sports as a sort of performance, one also sees that each performance is unique to the performer. Each athlete, even the most impressive and seemingly unique, is a part of a larger performance. Consider your favorite sport or athletic competition. How long has it been in existence? Does it have roots in ancient times? Often, athletes and sports personalities—from Roman gladiators to more recent English footballers, American basketball players, and Olympic athletes—are considered singularly talented at their respective sports; however, without the broader cultural context that has cultivated gymnastics, tennis, soccer, and basketball, these talents would have no stage on which to perform.

Anthropologists who study sports do so within a larger context of sports and society. Interests of anthropologists researching sports might include archaeological research related to sports tools, cultural anthropological research pertaining to how humans interact with sports, or even biological/physical anthropological research on biological maturation or physical growth (Damo, Oliven, and Guedes 2008).

FIGURE 16.17 A Roman bronze reproduction of *Discobolus*, by the ancient Greek sculptor Myron. Throwing the discus, still an event in contemporary track and field meets, has been traced back to the original Olympic Games in Ancient Greece. (credit: "Myron (fl c 460-440 BC) - Diskobolus (Discus Thrower), Plaster Replica with Broken Left Hand, Right, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, May 2013" by ketrin1407/flickr, CC BY 2.0)

Sports artifacts such as the weapons of gladiators and tools used in old and recent Olympic sports have offered

significant contributions to the anthropology of material art. Picture your favorite sport. It likely involves a specific tool that is a representation of that sport. Notable examples of such tools and artifacts include the lacrosse sticks of the Iroquois, hammers from the oldest Olympic hammer-throw competitions, and the modern-day American football uniform, which is designed for safety and decorated to represent affiliation, professionalism, and individual athletes.

Sports have also offered theatrical performances since ancient times. Picture the gladiators of ancient Rome entertaining the wealthy who could afford the best seats or wealthy English footballers entertaining those who are likely less wealthy. The status reversal of sports entertainers and audiences in modern-day sports represents the dichotomous nature of social status and is just one of many examples of cultural change throughout time.

The Evolution of Sports

For most of documented human history, sports have been a significant part of the human experience for both audience and participants. Archaeological artifacts pertaining to sports, including colosseums, weapons, and artistic representations of competition, have been traced back to as early as 2000 BCE in China. These ancient sports featured competitions that tested the strength, stamina, and techniques of performers, such as footraces and physical fights. Today, many nations around the world participate in a version of the Olympic Games that were popular in the ancient Greek village of Olympia. Early events included a marathon run and wrestling. The Olympics were revived in the late 19th century, with the first modern games occurring in 1896 in Athens, Greece. Though rules and regulation may have been less stringent and defined in the sports of previous centuries, competition as entertainment has existed for millennia.

FIGURE 16.18 These professional lacrosse players are take part in a game that originated with the Indigenous people of what is now Canada. (credit: "Tailgate Bayhawks Game Navy Marine Corps Memorial Stadium" by Maryland GovPics/flickr, CC BY 2.0)

Sports can provide much more than mere entertainment to people and societies. Today, when thinking about modern sports, a person may think of professional athletes such as National Basketball Association (NBA) star Kobe Bryant or National Football League (NFL) great Walter Payton. In early competitions, the wealthy attended sporting events in which the athletes were typically not wealthy or privileged. In modern times, the commercialization of sports has largely reversed this trend, with "common" people attending sporting events to watch wealthy athletes compete. The business of sports has created opportunities for financial and cultural success for people with exceptional athletic abilities. The success of athletes such as Kobe Bryant created opportunities for other athletes, paving the way for the success of people who may not have otherwise thought it possible to experience the fame, notoriety, and financial success of a modern athlete (Chacko 2020).

FIGURE 16.19 Ed Smith was a running back in college and the NFL in the 1930s. As homage to his skill, he was asked to model for the Heisman Trophy, which has immortalized the now iconic "stiff arm" pose he took. (credit: "A Quick Stop to See the First Ever Heisman Trophy Statue @UChicago" by Cole Camplese/flickr, CC BY 2.0)

Youth Sports

Recreational sports for youth are common in various cultures. This can be especially important in marginalized communities, where youth sports are often viewed as deterrents from (or alternatives to) potentially dangerous activities or preventive structures that support youth development and community by focusing on positive actions that reduce adverse social behaviors. Youth sports programs are often community-building initiatives. One such initiative is the NFL's Play 60 program, which challenges NFL football players to engage in activities with underrepresented communities, encouraging kids of all skill levels to come together to play sports.

Among Indigenous Americans, an aggressive style of basketball called reservation ball, or **rezball** for short, is prominent in reservation communities. Rezball is different from traditional basketball, as the techniques used encourage relentlessly aggressive play and quick shooting. For youth on reservations, this may be one of a limited number of recreation opportunities. Rezball is documented in the Netflix docuseries *Basketball or Nothing* and a 2009 ESPN story about the role of rezball in the culture of Native American children.

16.4 Anthropology, Representation, and Performance

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Identify how cultural identities, norms, values, and social structures are represented in art, music, and sports.
- Describe how art, music, and sports can function as means of resistance to dominant sociocultural forms and processes.

Art, music, and sports all articulate the experiences of people. One of these experiences might be resistance or rebellion. Whether it is a piece of art depicting a revolution, a rap song challenging the establishment, or a protest at a sporting event on a global stage, expression of the need for change are common in contemporary culture. This section will explore cultural identities; the use of art, music, and sports as resistance; and the

representations created by each specialization.

Cultural Identities

Think about sporting team uniforms or a clothing style worn by members of a musical group. Each outfit on its own may not be distinct or significant, but when worn by a group of athletes or musicians and their fans, they become a source of identity. Since prehistoric times, art, music, and sports have been a source of cultural identity. Arts and sports have been intertwined with several human rights movements and the push for diversity, equity, and inclusion. Music has been a means of coded language for escape. Sports have long been a platform for cultural identity and has presented opportunities for cultural evolution and resistance. The Olympics are just one example of a sporting event that is linked deeply with national identity and nation pride.

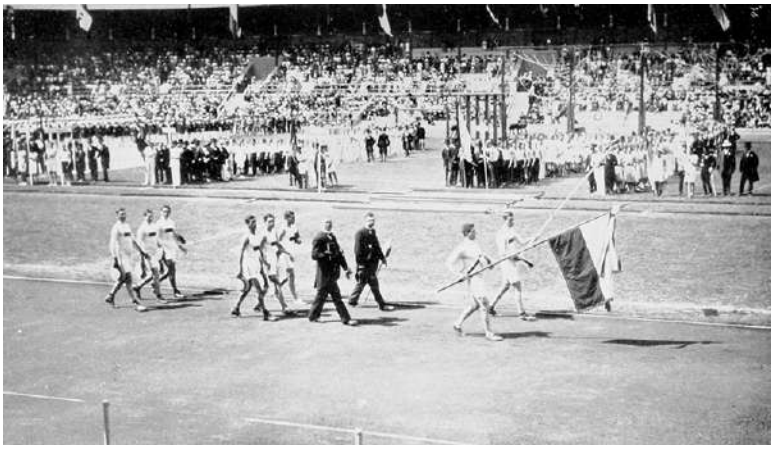

FIGURE 16.20 The opening ceremonies of the Olympic games are celebrations of national identity and nation pride. (credit: "The team of Chile at the opening ceremony of the 1912 Summer Olympics" by photographer of IOC/ Official Olympic Report/Wikimedia Commons, Public Domain)

Art as Resistance

Art is often used as an act of resistance. Graffiti and hip-hop are two forms of artistic expression that have been viewed as acts of resistance in modern times. The practice of **graffiti** as it is known today is reminiscent of ancient cave painting, as both are drawings, depictions, and writings on a wall. Ancient graffiti can help archaeologists understand general levels of literacy among a population of people or provide linguistic anthropologists with insight into the development of language through time.

While writings on walls is an ancient practice, graffiti became a popular form of cultural expression in Western countries in the 1960s. Modern graffiti is often performed in public view, as it is intended to make a statement. Today, during most political uprisings, researchers are able to easily find graffiti expressing views that inform and shape the political movement. Although many appreciate the communicative and artistic qualities of graffiti, others view it as visual pollution, and graffiti continues to be met with opposition.

One of the most iconic modern graffiti artists is Banksy, whose art is depicted in Figure 16.24. Banksy is the pseudonym of an English street artist who has been active for more than three decades (Ellsworth-Jones 2013). His identity remains unconfirmed. His work began to appear in the early 1990s in Bristol, England, and can now be found in cities around the world, including London, New York, and Paris. Based on reports from those who have secured interviews with him, Banksy views his art as an act of rebellion. He was often in trouble as a teenager, which is when he first began exploring art. His art typically responds to social or cultural issues. One example is his series in New Orleans, Louisiana, which critiqued the government response to Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

FIGURE 16.21 This mural by graffiti artist Banksy references both the Grim Reaper and the yellow "smiley face." (credit: "Banksy - Grin Reaper With Tag" by Szater/Wikimedia Commons, Public Domain)

Music as Resistance

Hip-hop is a form of music that has consistently served as a means of protesting injustice toward people of color. From its inception in the 1970s at neighborhood block parties, hip-hop has rapidly spread worldwide to influence various cultures, transitioning from the margins of American culture to a central element of global pop culture. The culture of hip-hop offers possibilities for rich anthropological exploration, including linguistics factors, performance, music, and lyricism. The messages expressed by hip-hop often include complex social commentaries.

With increased representation has come increased acceptance of hip-hop as a respected art form. In 2018, rap artist Kendrick Lamar was awarded a Pulitzer Prize for his album *DAMN.* and lauded by former president Barack Obama (Hubbard 2019). His fourth album release, *DAMN.* demonstrated why some call him one of the most influential rappers of his time. Perhaps better known is Public Enemy, the mid-1980s rap group created by Chuck D and Flavor Flav. The group's lyrics often cite their political beliefs and deep-seated opinions about American racism and the American media.

The evolution of hip-hop can be observed in many countries and societies. In the 1980s, it first began appearing in Japan and the Middle East. In Japan, it is thought to have begun with Hiroshi Fujiwara, who had an appreciation for old-school hip-hop and began to play it publicly. In the Middle East, some call it Arab rap or Arabic hip-hop. Heavily influenced by Western culture, these artistic representations demonstrate the vast and culturally diverse adoption of hip-hop as art and expression. Klash, the Muslim rapper shown in Figure 16.25, is well known in Middle Eastern cultures for telling the story of Muslim people through his artistry. Rap is not a subculture but a media and method for telling a story and at times expressing the resistance of a group of people.

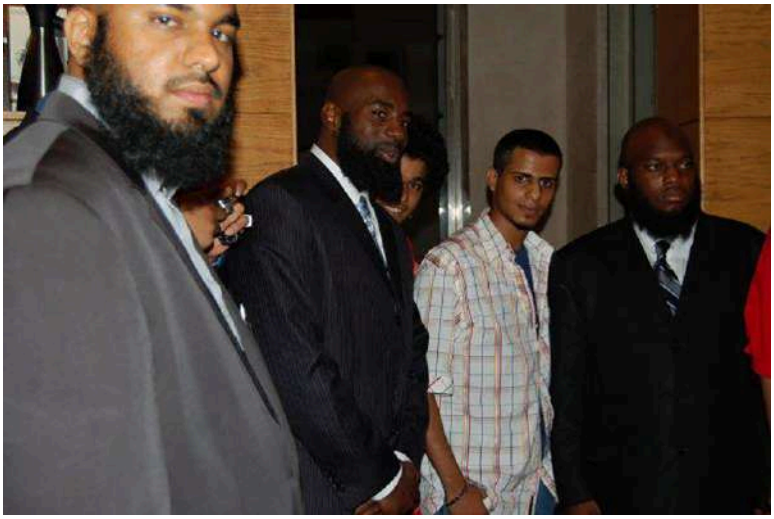

FIGURE 16.22 Muslim rapper Klash with fellow rap artist Loon. From its origins in American inner cities, rap has spread around the globe. (credit: "klash with loon in jeddah city" by Ahmed550055/Wikimedia Commons, Public Domain)

Even more recently, Native American hip-hop has been a medium for Native Americans to tell their story and preserve the history of their peoples. Founded in American rap and hip-hop culture, this new form of expression has been embraced by rappers throughout Native American communities. It has been used to tell stories, explain history, and even encourage political activism on social issues.

Sports as Resistance

Throughout time, sports have been a global focal point for resistance. The Olympics have repeatedly been a site of global resistance and a setting for challenging societal norms and expectations. In Figure 16.26, Black American athletes Tommie Smith and John Carlos, gold and bronze medalists respectively, are depicted raising black-gloved fists during their medal ceremony as the US national anthem plays (Smith 2011). This gesture became known as the 1968 Olympics Black Power salute. Smith later described his raised, black-gloved fist as a symbol of support for all those who are and have been oppressed. Smith and Carlos made their demonstration in response to human rights violations perpetuated in the United States. Another example of resistance was seen four years later, when Jackie Robinson, the first Black player in Major League Baseball, wrote in his autobiography, recalling the opening game of his first World Series championship: "As I write this twenty years later, I cannot stand and sing the anthem. I cannot salute the flag; I know that I am a black man in a white world" (Robinson [1972] 1995, xxiv).

FIGURE 16.23 When Tommie Smith and John Carlos raised black-gloved fists at their Olympic medal ceremonies in 1968, they publicly expressed support for oppressed people and resistance to a culture viewed as perpetuating that oppression. (credit: "IMGP7613-olympics-mural" by Rae Allen/flickr, CC BY 2.0)

For many, a more familiar act of protest is likely NFL player Colin Kaepernick's kneeling during the singing of the nation anthem in 2016 following the shooting deaths of Black men Michael Brown, Alton Sterling, and Philando Castille at the hands of police officers (Lief 2019). In 2016, approximately 68 percent of all NFL players were Black (Gertz 2017). Kaepernick continued to kneel during the anthem for the remainder of the season. His gesture was a symbol of support for the Black Lives Matter movement, which seeks to end police brutality against Black people and other forms of racially motivated violence in the United States. Initially, feedback regarding Kaepernick's gesture within the sports world was negative. However, following the death of George Floyd in 2020, there has been an increased interest in understanding systemic oppression. This had led to initiatives by organizations such as the NFL, Black Lives Matter, and others to support inclusion and open dialogues about racism. Throughout the seasons following Kaepernick's initial act of kneeling, it became common practice in the world of professional sports for athletes to kneel in solidarity. This included Black players and some White players.

The 2016 Olympics in Rio de Janeiro were a demonstration of social stratification. Media coverage of the 2016 Rio Olympics reported on the less-than-acceptable environmental, safety, and health conditions. Athletes from more developed nations openly criticized the unsanitary and inhospitable conditions of the housing and training facilities, which included unpotable water sources, trash in commons areas, and dirty and unsanitary dormitories. While some protested silently, others used their global notoriety to publicly protest the conditions. The images and stories provided from Rio by journalists and mainstream media sources showed garbage-ridden streets, unsanitary rooms and facilities, and irreparably damaged buildings. For Rio, the Olympics were supposed to be a pinnacle of national pride and a positive contribution to the global stage. For many who attended, the event proved to be far less than the Olympic image depicted in popular imagination.

Integral Features

Art, music, and sports can themselves be forms of resistance and at the same time can display evidence of historical resistance. A protest, a cultural statement, the overthrow of a regime—all can be found in, and at times have even been started by, works of art, music, and sports. From the ancient Romans to professional American football players, people have used these mediums to fight for their causes and to ensure that the histories of their plights are recorded in the archives of time.

Art, music, and sports have told the stories of people since prehistoric times. Ingrained in the human experience, these mediums have been used to establish cultural and national identity. The images in art, the words of song, and the traditions of sport have had significant impacts on established norms and senses of

personal and group identity. These aspects of the human condition are so foundational that each has been used as a form of resistance. Art, music, and sports have each contributed to the development of people and societies in important ways, and can each reveal important aspects of both past and current cultures.

MINI-FIELDWORK ACTIVITY

A Study of Ethnomusicology

Music is one of the most expressive and diverse forms of art. For this activity, do the following:

1. Review ethnomusicological study techniques.
2. Conduct your own ethnomusicological fieldwork. This can be done by interacting with musicians, attending a music event virtually or in person, or interviewing audience members at a musical performance. Interview both musicians and audience members about the meaning of the music. What did they hear? How did it make them feel? What did it make them want to do? Record the results of your interviews.
3. Additionally, record your own response to the music. What did you hear? How did it make you feel? What does it make you want to do?
4. Collect the information and write a 3–5-page comparative reflection paper on what you learned from your interviews and how they compare and contrast to your own experience and discoveries.

All music-making activities are appropriate, whether a formal or informal concert, a street performance, or gospel singing in church. You should maintain a field journal to record data, observations, and analysis.

Research and Literature Review Activity

1. Pick two (2) different examples of visual art, from the same time period but different socioeconomic microcultures, to compare and contrast.
2. Write a 3–5-page summary paper in which you do the following:
    - Identify people and/or studies that have reported on anthropological finds relevant to the images you selected.
    - Describe the evolution of the art form you are analyzing from an early time.
    - Explain how the anthropological studies you cite compare with other anthropological study approaches.
    - Address how the art studied is an evolutionary example of the human experience.
    - Evaluate what you perceive to be the future of the art as it continues to develop and evolve in future generations.

Resources

Basketball or Nothing. 2019. Philadelphia: WorkShop Content Studios. Netflix, 6 episodes.

Rice, Timothy. 2014. *Ethnomusicology: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press.

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Key Terms

art the application of human creative skill and imagination to produce works intended to be appreciated primarily for their beauty or emotional power, typically but not exclusively in a visual form such as a painting or sculpture.

body painting application of paint to the body

cultural appropriation the adoption, usually without acknowledgment, of cultural identity markers from subcultures or minority communities into mainstream culture by people with a relatively privileged status.

graffiti drawings, depictions, and writings on a wall typically without permission and meant for the public to see

iconographic study the study of visual images, symbols, or modes of representation collectively associated with a person, cult, or movement.

meme an image, video, piece of text, etc., typically humorous in nature, that is copied and spread rapidly by internet users, often with slight variations.

performance a musical, dramatic, or other form of entertainment presented before an audience.

rezball short for reservation ball, a style of basketball played in Native American reservation communities.

scarification the branding, burning, or etching of designs into the skin.

sociodemographic of, relating to, or involving a combination of social and demographic factors.

tattooing a form of body art where a mark, symbol, picture or design is placed on the skin. Tattooing has been practiced for thousands of years.

Summary

Art, music, and sports are deeply intertwined with the human experience. Anthropology offers the space to examine art, music, and sports through a cultural lens in order to study the ways in which they exist within sociocultural frameworks.

The anthropology of the arts is a subfield of cultural anthropology that explores the arts in a broader context within and between different cultural settings. Anthropologists study art differently than other social scientist, relying on data collection through direct, personal, in-depth observations of lived experiences and interactions. Art is expressed through a variety of formats, including music, visual art, literary art, and body art.

Anthropology explores the various cultural manifestations of humanity. All cultures decorate and modify the human body in some way, whether temporarily or permanently. Body art can be spiritual, cultural, or aesthetic. This includes tattooing, body paint, and hairstyling.

Ethnomusicology is a subfield of cultural anthropology that examines the music of different cultures and the people who make it, as well as the intended audience of the music. The interdisciplinary nature of ethnomusicology speaks to diverse approaches to studying the anthropology of music. Music as an art form expresses a wide array of perspectives and experiences.

Sports are a form of performance, and each participant performs within a broader cultural context. Anthropologists of sport are interested in studying sports within the context of society. Sports culture has resulted in cultural phenomena based on the popularity of athletes. Sports also serve as an escape for many populations with limited choices in recreational activities.

Critical Thinking Questions

1. How do people learn to create art and music in modern Western societies? Describe your own experiences becoming enculturated in the American style of creating art and music.
2. Pick a favorite image, one that was created specifically as an art object. This might be a painting, a photograph, a depiction of a sculpture, or something similar. Analyze it in an anthropological fashion. Who created it? Why was it created? Who was the audience or market for this object? What message(s) do you perceive when looking at it?
3. How far back can you trace the history of your favorite style of music? In your analysis, include instrumentation, rhythms, vocalizations (if any), and sites of performance.
4. What role(s) do sports play in your own culture? Address both informal sports (e.g., pickup games between friends) and professional/national teams.
5. How would global and racial inclusion in the United States differ without the contributions of

art, music, and sports professionals?

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CHAPTER 17
Medical Anthropology

Figure 17.1 The US Army Corp of Engineers opened this community health clinic in the country of Benin in West Africa in 2013. The clinic has waiting, consultation, observation and treatment rooms, and a drug store. (credit: "Pehunco Health Clinic opens" by US Army Corps of Engineers/Wale Adelakun/flickr, Public Domain)

CHAPTER OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION Health and a preoccupation with maintaining it permeates all aspects of human culture. Health is a concern to humans everywhere. There is no end to the variety of ways cultures across history have treated health, healing, and medicine. Human health and well-being sit at the intersection of biology and culture. Both physical and social environments shape well-being and health outcomes. Medical anthropology is a holistic specialty that draws on all four fields of anthropology but primarily builds on cultural anthropology and biological anthropology to understand the health implications of a culture's impact on human physiology and well-being.

- How do you define health?
- How do you maintain your health?
- What factors do you think contribute to health and illness?

17.1 What Is Medical Anthropology?

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this section, you will be able to do the following:

- Define health, illness, sickness, and the sick role.
- Describe early research and methods in medical anthropology.
- Explain Franz Boas's influence in establishing the foundations of medical anthropology.
- Describe how medical anthropology has developed since World War II.

Social Construction of Health

The World Health Organization defines **health** as "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity" (World Health Organization 2020). Health is affected by multiple social, biological, and environmental factors. **Disease** is strictly biological—an abnormality that affects an individual's physical structure, chemistry, or function. Going back to the time of the ancient Greek physician Hippocrates, doctors have regarded disease as the result of both a person's lifestyle habits and the social environment in which they live. **Illness**, by comparison, is the individual's *sociocultural experience* of a disruption to their physical or mental well-being. An individual's perception of their own illness is shaped by how that illness is viewed, discussed, and explained by the society they live in. The social perception of another person's **sickness** affects that person's social well-being and how they are viewed and treated by others. **Sick roles** are the social expectations for a sick person's behaviors based on their particular sickness—how they should act, how they should treat the sickness, and how others should treat them. **Malady** is the term anthropologists use to encompass disease, illness, and sickness.

- *Health* is your state of well-being.
- *Disease* is a biological abnormality.
- *Illness* is your sociocultural experience of health.
- *Sickness* is a social perception of ill health.
- *Malady* is a broad term for everything above.

Term	Definition	Example
Health	State of well-being	Wellness prior to infection
Disease	A biological abnormality	Viral infection
Illness	A patient's sociocultural experience of disrupted health	Fever, sore throat, cough, worry about missing class, disappointment of missing an outing with friends
Sickness	A social perception of ill health	Expectations such as: stay home and rest if you have a fever; do not attend class or go out with friends; see a doctor if it lasts longer than 48 hours
Malady	A broad term for everything above	Disruption of health caused by a viral infection with fever, sore throat, cough; worry about missing work/class; and the social expectation you will stay home and rest

TABLE 17.1 Key Terms Used in Medical Anthropology

Foundational to medical anthropology is an understanding of health and malady that includes social experiences and cultural definitions. Medical anthropology studies how societies construct understandings of health and illness, including medical treatments for all types of maladies. Culture affects how we perceive everything, including health. Culture shapes how people think and believe and the values they hold. It shapes everything people have and do. Many cultures approach health and illness in completely different ways from one another, often informed by a number of societal factors. Medical anthropology provides a framework for common study and comparison between cultures, highlighting systems and illustrating how culture determines how health is perceived.

History of Medical Anthropology

While medical anthropology is a relatively new subfield, it has deep roots within four-field American anthropology, with a strong connection to early European anthropologists' study of religion. The holistic approach of Franz Boas was also key to the development of medical anthropology. One focus of Boas's research was analysis of the "race theory" common in the 19th and early 20th centuries in the United States. According to this theory, one's assigned racial category and ethnic background determined certain physical features as well as behavioral characteristics. Boas challenged this assumption through studies of the health and physiology of immigrant families in New York City in 1912. Boas found that there was a great deal of flexibility in human biological characteristics within an ethnic group, with social factors such as nutrition and child-rearing practices playing a key role in determining human development and health. He noted that cultural changes to nutrition and child-rearing practices, changes that are commonly a part of the immigrant experience, were linked to generational changes in biology. Boas provided empirical data from his own primary sources that refuted theories of biological inheritance as the source of social behaviors and revealed the impact of local environments (natural, modified, and social) in structuring cultural and physical outcomes. This foundation was starkly opposed to the inherent racism of social evolutionism, which was the dominant anthropological theory of his time.

Boas's students, such as Ruth Benedict, Margaret Mead, and Edward Sapir, all continued aspects of his work, taking their research in unique directions that affect medical anthropology to this day. Benedict's cultural personality studies, Mead's work on child-rearing practices and adolescence, and Sapir's work on psychology and language laid the foundations of psychological anthropology. Their foray into psychological anthropology was preceded by the work of British psychiatrist and anthropologist W. H. R. Rivers (1901), who studied the inheritance of sensory capabilities and disabilities among Melanesian populations while participating in the Torres Strait island expedition in 1898. He developed a great respect for his Melanesian research participants and utilized his research findings to denounce the "noble savage" fallacy. By demonstrating that a shared biological mechanism of inheritance and environmental influences shaped the Melanesian senses in the same way as it did the British, he illustrated that their mental capacity was the same as Europeans.

FIGURE 17.2 Franz Boas's study on immigrants to the United States showed that health is influenced by a number of factors, including many determined by one's social and physical environment. (credit: US National Archives and Records Administration/Wikimedia Commons, Public Domain)

Medical anthropology also has roots in the anthropology of religion, a subfield of anthropology that shines a lens on many aspects of health. The anthropology of religion looks at how humans develop and enact spiritual beliefs in their daily lives and at how these beliefs are utilized as a form of social control. A number of commonly studied key frameworks of the anthropology of religion—rituals of healing, taboos of health, shamanic healing, health beliefs, cultural symbolism, and stigma, among them—focus on health and health outcomes. A number of notable early religious anthropologists, including E. E. Evans-Pritchard, Victor and Edith Turner, and Mary Douglas, did work on subjects such as healing rituals, misfortune and harm, pollution, and taboo. Evans-Pritchard's work among the Azande people of North Central Africa continues to be foundational to medical anthropology. Especially important is the chapter "The Notion of Witchcraft Explains Unfortunate Events" from the book *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande*, which introduces the domain of causation and its many cross-cultural forms. This chapter directly impacted the concept of explanatory models, which we will cover in depth later in this chapter. The work of Victor and Edith Turner focused on ritual healing, pilgrimage, and socially enforced morality. Mary Douglas's *Purity and Danger* ([1966] 2002) examined the concepts of pollution and taboo as well as rituals designed to restore purity. Her work continues to be influential, particularly for medical anthropologists focused on sickness-related stigma and its impact on patients' illness experiences.

World War II brought about a profound change in the way anthropologists did their work. A number of Boas's students helped the British and United States governments during the war, a trend that continued after the war. Focusing on both public and private health initiatives, anthropologists increasingly worked to help people improve their health outcomes in the post-war era. These public health efforts were directly connected with the founding of the United Nations and the World Health Organization (WHO). In this period, well-being and health care were included in the declaration of human rights, and biomedical thinking became focused on "conquering" infectious disease.

The formal founding of the discipline of medical anthropology can be traced to the late 1970s. One landmark is the publication of George Foster and Barbara Anderson's (1978) medical anthropology textbook. However, many applied anthropologists and researchers in allied health fields, such as social epidemiology and public health, had been conducting cross-cultural health studies since the conclusion of World War II. These include Edward Wellin, Benjamin Paul, Erwin Ackerknecht, and John Cassell. Many of these early figures were themselves medical doctors who saw the limitations of a strictly biomechanical approach to health and disease.

PROFILES IN ANTHROPOLOGY

Paul Farmer, 1959–present, Jim Yong Kim, 1959–present

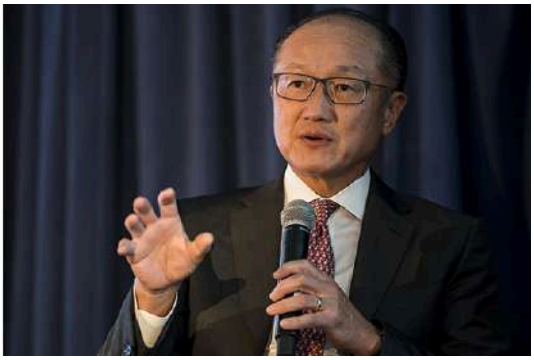

FIGURE 17.3 (left) Paul Farmer speaking at the University of Chicago in 2017. (credit: "Paul Farmer giving MacLeanPrize Lecture in 2017" by MacLean Center/Wikimedia Commons, CC-BY-3.0); (right) Jim Yong Kim speaking in New York City in 2018. (credit: "20th Anniversary Schwab Foundation GalaDinner" by Ben Hider/World Economic Forum/flickr, CC BY 2.0)

Personal Histories: Paul Farmer is a medical anthropologist and physician who first visited Haiti in 1983 as a volunteer. Inspired by this experience, Farmer set out to find a way to bring necessary treatments to parts of the world seemingly forgotten by modern medicine. When Harvard Medical School began offering a dual PhD/MD program, Farmer was among the first enrolled, and he soon founded Partners in Health (PIH) with his colleagues. Since then, he has championed affordable health care around the world. He is currently a professor of medicine and chief of the Division of Global Health Equity at Brigham and Women's Hospital, while still being actively involved in Partners in Health. Farmer has written extensively on the AIDS epidemic, infectious diseases, and health equity. In 2003, Farmer was the subject of Tracy Kidder's book *Mountains Beyond Mountains: The Quest of Dr. Paul Farmer, A Man Who Would Cure the World,* which is an accessible account of Farmer's work with Partners in Health. Farmer is married to Didi Bertrand Farmer, a Haitian medical anthropologist. They have three children.

Like Farmer, Jim Yong Kim was one of the first to enroll in Harvard Medical's dual medical anthropology PhD/MD program. He was a cofounder of Partners in Health while still in medical school, at a time when he was spending his summers in Haiti treating patients with limited access to health care. He championed the initial expansion of PIH into other countries, beginning with Peru. In 2003 Kim left Partners in Health to join the World Health Organization, becoming director of HIV/AIDs treatments and research in 2004. Under Kim, the WHO has fast-tracked a number of new treatments to help those affected by AIDS in Africa. Kim was the president of Dartmouth College from 2009 until 2012, when he became president of the World Bank. He held this position until 2019, when he left to join Global Infrastructure Partners.

Area of Anthropology: medical anthropology, applied anthropology

Accomplishments in the Field: Partners in Health was founded in 1987 by a group including Farmer and Kim, with the goal of setting up a clinic in Haiti to combat the devastation of the AIDS epidemic. Made up of volunteers, philanthropists, and medical students trained in anthropological methodology, the organization sought to combat the AIDS epidemic at a time when governments refused to adequately fund efforts to combat what was then perceived as a "gay disease." By the mid-1990s, PIH was offering patients in Haiti treatments that cost hundreds of dollars, as opposed to the tens of thousands of dollars they would have cost in the United States. They have since duplicated this work in other settings, and their methods have been used by countless nonprofits around the world to offer life-saving treatments to impoverished communities.

Importance of Their Work: Partners in Health works today in 11 countries, with a staff of over 18,000 spread across the globe. They build hospitals, health clinics, and research labs aimed at improving medical treatment and creating a more equitable global health care system. Their model has been replicated by countless

organizations around the world to bring down the cost of health care and increase the quality of the care given.

Since the 1980s, medical anthropologists have diversified the field through interdisciplinary applications of anthropology and the applied use of medical anthropology in health care and government policy. The role of the anthropologist in this work often varies but is typically focused on translating cultural nuance and biomedical knowledge into policy and human-centered care. Today, the field of medical anthropology includes applied anthropologists working in medical settings, nonprofits, and government entities such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and the WHO. Academic medical anthropologists are problem-oriented researchers who study the complex relationship between human culture and health. As can be seen in the lives and careers of the medical anthropologists highlighted in this chapter's profiles, medical anthropologists frequently occupy both academic and applied roles throughout their career as they seek to apply insights from their research to effect positive change in the lives of those they study.

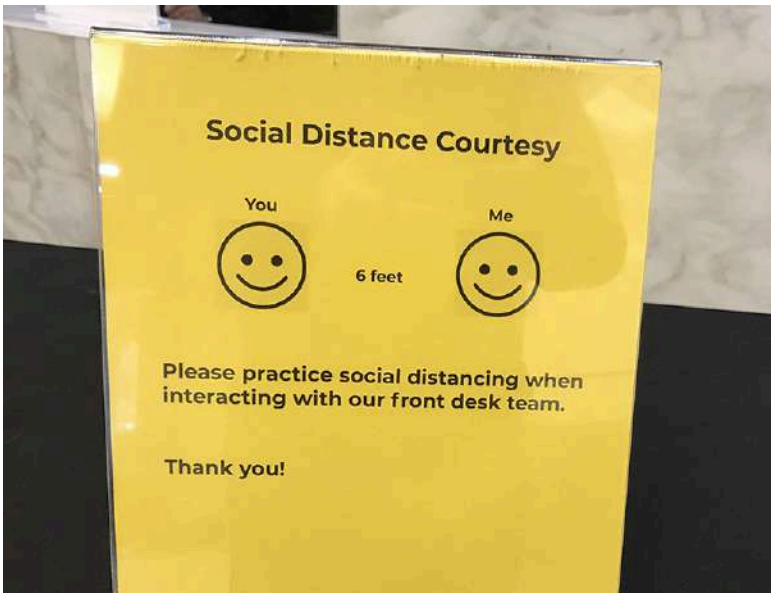

FIGURE 17.4 During the COVID-19 pandemic, medical recommendations informed emerging cultural taboos, highlighting the link between medicine and culture. (credit: "Covid-19" by Daniel Lobo/Daquellamanera.org/flickr, Public Domain)

17.2 Ethnomedicine

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this section, you will be able to do the following:

- Define ethnomedicine, traditional environmental knowledge, and biomedicine.
- Provide examples of cultural and societal systems that use religion and faith to heal.
- Define medical pluralism.

Ethnomedicine is a society's cultural knowledge about the management of health and treatments for illness, sickness, and disease. This includes the culturally appropriate process for seeking health care and the culturally defined signs and symptoms of illness that raise a health concern. Ethnomedical systems are frequently closely related to belief systems and religious practices. Healing can include rituals and natural treatments drawn from the local environment. Healing specialists in an ethnomedical system are knowledgeable individuals who undergo training or apprenticeship. Some examples of ethnomedical healers are midwives, doulas, herbalists, bonesetters, surgeons, and shamans, whose ethnomedicine existed in cultural traditions around the world prior to biomedicine. Anthropologists frequently note that ethnomedicinal healers possess knowledge of both how to heal and how to inflict harm by physical and sometimes metaphysical means. Ethnomedicine does not focus on "traditional" medicine, but instead allows

for cross-cultural comparison of medical systems.

FIGURE 17.5 A Peruvian shaman prepares herbal medicine for an upcoming ritual. (credit: "Shaman" by Alan Kotok/flickr, CC BY 2.0)

Some forms of healing rely upon spiritual knowledge as a form of medicine. Within shamanism, people deliberately enter the spirit world to treat ailments, with the culture's shaman acting as an emissary. The goal may be to eliminate the illness or to at least identify its source. Similarly, faith healing relies upon a shared understanding of faith and local beliefs, with spirituality pervading the healing process. Exorcising individuals of possession by negative spirits is a common form of faith healing that occurs within Christian, Islamic, Buddhist, and shamanic frameworks. In many cases, cultures that utilize biomedicine also utilize some forms of faith healing.

Ethnopharmacology utilizes herbs, foods, and other natural substances to treat or heal illness. Traditional ethnopharmacological treatments are currently of great interest to pharmaceutical companies looking for new biomedical cures. Many common medicines have roots in ethnopharmacological traditions. Used in Chinese medicine, indigenous American healing, and traditional European medicine, willow bark is a widespread cure for headaches. In 1897, the chemist Dr. Felix Hoffmann, working for the Bayer corporation, isolated acetylsalicylic acid as the active pain-reducing ingredient in willow bark, giving the world Bayer aspirin.

The concept of **traditional ecological knowledge**, or TEK, refers to medical knowledge of different herbs, animals, and resources in an environment that provides a basis for ethnomedicine. Many cultures have been able to translate detailed awareness of their environments, such as where water is and where and when certain herbs grow, into complex and effective ethnomedical systems (Houde 2007). In 2006, Victoria Reyes-Garcia, working with others, conducted a comprehensive study of Amazonian TEK. Victoria and her colleagues collected information regarding plants useful for food and medicine from 650 research participants from villages along the Maniqui River in the Amazon River basin.

China's traditional medicine system is another excellent example of an ethnomedical system that relies heavily on TEK and ethnopharmacology. While many in China do rely upon biomedicine to treat specific health problems, they also keep themselves in balance using traditional Chinese medicine. The decision of which health system to consult is often left to the patient, but at times doctors will suggest a patient visit a traditional apothecary and vice versa, creating a complementary medical system that makes use of both approaches. While bound by geography prior to the 19th century, in today's globalized world a traditional Chinese doctor can use resources from anywhere around the world, whether it is dried body parts of a tiger or herbs found in another part of China. Chinese traditional medicine, as an ethnomedical system, is heavily influenced by culture and context. It focuses on balancing the body, utilizing a number of forces from the natural world. Traditional Chinese medicine makes use of substances as diverse as cicada shells, tiger livers, dinosaur bones, and ginseng to create medicine. Healers in this system are often in a role similar to Western pharmacists, concocting medicine in a variety of forms such as pills, tonics, and balms. The differences between a

traditional Chinese medication healer and biomedical pharmacist include both the tools and ingredients used and the foundational assumptions about the cause of and treatments for various ailments. Around the world, traditional environmental knowledge is used both in place of biomedicine and alongside it.

Biomedicine is an ethnomedical system deeply shaped by European and North American history and rooted in the cultural system of Western science. It draws heavily from biology and biochemistry. Biomedicine treats disease and injuries with scientifically tested cures. Biomedical health care professionals base their assessment of the validity of a treatment on the results of clinical trials, conducted following the principles of the scientific method. It should be noted that as each health care professional is not conducting their own research, but instead relying on the work of others, this assessment still requires faith. Biomedicine places its faith in the scientific method, where other ethnomedical systems place their faith in a deity, the healer's power, or time-tested treatments passed down in traditional ecological knowledge. Biomedicine is not free from culture; it is an ethnomedical system shaped by Western cultural values and history. Biomedicine falls short of its ideal of scientific objectivity. Medical anthropologists have extensively documented the way systemic prejudices such as racism, classism, and sexism permeate biomedicine, impacting its effectiveness and perpetuating health inequalities. Still, in the Western world, biomedicine is often utilized as a point of comparison for other ethnomedical systems.

Biomedicine has been critiqued by medical anthropologists for assuming predominance over other forms of healing and cultural knowledge. In many contexts, biomedicine is presumed to be superior because it is clinical and based on scientific knowledge. Yet this presumed superiority requires that a patient trusts and believes in science and the biomedical system. If a person mistrusts biomedicine, whether because of a bad experience with the biomedical model or a preference for another ethnomedical approach, their health outcomes will suffer if they are forced to rely on the biomedical system. Biomedicine can also disrupt and threaten culturally established treatments and cures. For example, in a culture that treats schizophrenia by granting a person spiritual power and treating them as part of the community, labeling that individual as mentally ill according to biomedical terms takes away their power and removes their agency. In most cases, a hybrid model, in which biomedicine does not assume supremacy but instead works alongside and supports ethnomedicine, is the most effective approach. A hybrid model accords the ill the ability to choose those treatments that they think will best help.

FIGURE 17.6 An apothecary in a Nanjing hospital in China prepares a treatment grounded in traditional Chinese medicine. Contemporary medical facilities sometimes offer biomedical practice and ethnomedicine together in one setting. (credit: "Apothecary mixing traditional chinese medicine at Jiangsu Chinese Medical Hospital in Nanjing, China" by Kristoffer Trolle/flickr, CC BY 2.0)

Medical pluralism occurs when competing ethnomedical traditions coexist and form distinct health subcultures with unique beliefs, practices, and organizations. In many contemporary societies, ethnomedical systems coexist with and frequently incorporate biomedicine. Biomedicine is privileged as the dominant

health care system in the United States, but in many metropolitan areas, people can also consult practitioners of Chinese medicine, Ayurvedic medicine, homeopathic medicine, chiropractic medicine, and other ethnomedicinal systems from around the world. Examples of medical pluralism are fairly common in contemporary Western society: yoga as a treatment for stress and as a form of physical and mental therapy, essential oils derived from traditional medicine to enhance health, and countless others. Contemporary cultures often fuse biomedicine and ethnomedicine rather than just choosing one or the other. However, the privilege and medical authority of biomedicine does not always afford people the right to choose, or may give them only a limited capacity to do so. Anne Fadiman's (1998) *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down*, which explores the conflicts between a small hospital in California and the parents of a Hmong child with epilepsy over the child's care, is a classic example of the cultural conflicts that can occur in medically pluralistic societies.

In many parts of the world, biomedicine has accompanied colonialization, and indigenous health practices have been suppressed in favor of biomedicine. Juliet McMullin's (2010) *Healthy Ancestor: Embodied Inequality and the Revitalization of Native Hawaiian Health* discusses the suppression of Hawaii's indigenous ethnomedical system as a long-lasting legacy of its colonial history. The book includes the efforts of contemporary Hawaiians to regain the healthy lifestyle of their precolonial ancestors. McMullin concludes that while contemporary biomedical health care professionals are more open to Hawaii's ethnomedical practices than their predecessors were, there is still work to be done.

17.3 Theories and Methods

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this section, you will be able to do the following:

- Discuss the importance of cross-cultural comparison and cultural relativism in study of human health.
- Explain why both objectivity and subjectivity are needed in the study of health.
- Discuss ethnographic research methods and their specific applications to the study of human health.
- Summarize the theoretical frameworks that guide medical anthropologists.

The Importance of Cultural Context

Culture is at the center of all human perspectives and shapes all that humans do. Cultural relativism is crucial to medical anthropology. There is a great degree of variety in the symptoms and conditions that cultures note as significant indicators of diminished health. How the sick are treated varies between cultures as well, including the types of treatments prescribed for a particular sickness. Cultural context matters, and health outcomes determined by culture are informed by that culture's many parts. The United States, for example, relies heavily on biomedicine, treating symptoms of mental and physical illness with medication. This prevalence is not merely an economic, social, or scientific consideration, but all three. A cultural group's political-economic context and its cultural beliefs, traditions, and values all create the broader context in which a health system exists and all impact individuals on a psychosocial level. Behaviors such as dietary choices and preferences, substance use, and activity level—frequently labeled as lifestyle risk factors—are all heavily influenced by culture and political-economic forces.

While Western cultures rely upon biomedicine, others favor ethnopharmacology and/or ritual healing. Medical anthropologists must attempt to observe and evaluate ethnomedical systems without a bias toward biomedicine. Medical anthropologists must be cautious of tendencies toward ethnocentrism. Ethnocentrism in medical anthropology takes the form of using the health system of one's own culture as a point of comparison, giving it preference when analyzing and evaluating other systems. An American anthropologist who studies ethnomedicine in the Amazon River basin must be careful to limit their bias toward a biomedical approach as much as they can. That is not to say that subjective experience and opinion need be discarded entirely, merely that bias should be acknowledged and where necessary limited. Admitting bias is the first step in combating it. Being aware of one's own ethnocentrism allows an anthropologist to analyze culture and medicine more truthfully.

Methods of Medical Anthropology

Medical anthropology is a highly intersectional subfield of anthropology. The field addresses both the biological and social dimensions of maladies and their treatments. Medical anthropologists must thus become comfortable with a wide-ranging tool kit, as diverse as health itself. Like all anthropologists, medical anthropologists rely on qualitative methods, such as ethnographic fieldwork, but they also must be able to appropriately use quantitative methods such as biometrics (including blood pressure, glucose levels, nutritional deficiencies, hormone levels, etc.) and medical statistics (such as rates of comorbidities, birth rates, mortality rates, and hospital readmission rates). Medical anthropologists can be found working in a myriad of endeavors: aiding public health initiatives, working in clinical settings, influencing health care policy, tracking the spread of a disease, or working for companies that develop medical technologies. The theories and methods of medical anthropology are invaluable to such endeavors.

Qualitative Methods

Within medical anthropology, a number of qualitative research methods are invaluable tools. Qualitative methods are hands-on, first-person approaches to research. An anthropologist in the room or on the ground writing down field notes based on what they see and recording events as they happen creates valuable data for themselves and for others.

Participant observation is a methodology in which the anthropologist makes first-person observations while participating in a culture. In medical anthropology, participant observation can take many forms. Anthropologists observe and participate in clinical interactions, shamanic rituals, public health initiatives, and faith healing. A form of participant observation, **clinical observations** allow the anthropologist to see a culture's healing practices at work. Whether a doctor is treating COVID-19 or a shaman is treating a case of soul loss, the anthropologist observes the dynamics of the treatment and in some cases actually participates as a patient or healer's apprentice. This extremely hands-on method gives the anthropologist in-depth firsthand experience with a culture's health system but also poses a risk of inviting personal bias.

Anthropologists observe a myriad of topics, from clinical interactions to shamanic rituals, public health initiatives to faith healing. They carry these firsthand observations with them into their interviews, where they inform the questions they ask. In medical anthropology, interviews can take many forms, from informal chats to highly structured conversations. An example of a highly structured interview is an illness narrative interview. **Illness narrative interviews** are discussions of a person's illness that are recorded by anthropologists. These interviews can be remarkably diverse: they can involve formal interviews or informal questioning and can be recorded, written down, or take place electronically via telephone or video conference call. The social construction of sickness and its impact on an individual's illness experience is deeply personal. Illness narratives almost always focus on the person who is ill but can at times involve their caregivers, family, and immediate network as well.

Another method commonly used in medical anthropology, **health decision-making analysis**, looks at the choices and considerations that go into deciding how to treat health issues. The anthropologist interviews the decision makers and creates a treatment decision tree, allowing for analysis of the decisions that determine what actions to take. These decisions can come from both the patient and the person providing the treatment. What religious or spiritual choices might make a person opt out of a procedure? What economic issues might they face at different parts of their illness or sickness? Health decision-making analysis is a useful tool for looking at how cultures treat sickness and health, and it highlights a culture's economic hierarchies, spiritual beliefs, material realities, and social considerations such as caste and gender.

Quantitative Methods

Quantitative methods produce numeric data that can be counted, correlated, and evaluated for statistical significance. Anthropologists utilize census data, medical research data, and social statistics. They conduct quantitative surveys, social network analysis that quantifies social relationships, and analysis of biomarkers. Analysis of census data is an easy way for medical anthropologists to understand the demographics of the population they are studying, including birth and death rates. Census data can be broken down to analyze culturally specific demographics, such as ethnicity, religion, and other qualifiers as recorded by the census takers. At times, an anthropologist may have to record this data themselves if the available data is absent or

insufficient. This type of analysis is often done as a kind of background research on the group being studying, creating a broader context for more specific analysis to follow.

Also important to medical anthropologists are analyses of **medical statistics**. The study of medical records helps researchers understand who is getting treated for what sickness, determine the efficacy of specific treatments, and observe complications that arise with statistical significance, among other considerations. Analysis of census data combined with medical statistics allows doctors and other health providers, as well as medical anthropologists, to study a population and apply that data toward policy solutions. Famous examples include the World Health Organization's work on health crises such as HIV/AIDS, Ebola, and COVID-19.

Questionnaires are more personal to the anthropologist, allowing them to ask pointed questions pertinent to their particular research. Surveys make it possible for anthropologists to gather a large quantity of data that can then be used to inform the questions they ask using qualitative methods. Distribution methods for surveys vary and including means such as personally asking the questions, releasing the survey through a health care provider, or offering online surveys that participants choose to answer.

These are the most common methods used by medical anthropologists. Different theories are influential in determining which of the methods a particular research might favor. These theories inform how an anthropologist might interpret their data, how they might compose a study from beginning to end, and how they interact with the people they study. Combined with more general anthropological theory, each anthropologist must craft a composite of theory and method to create their own personalized study of the world of human health.

Theoretical Approaches to Medical Anthropology

Social Health

Biomedicine, the science-based ethnomedical system practiced in the United States, recognizes the impact physical health and mental health have on one another: when one falters, the other does as well. There is an increasing awareness in biomedicine of a third type of health, **social health**, which has long been recognized by many ethnomedical systems around the world. Each of the theoretical approaches to medical anthropology demonstrates that to develop a holistic understanding of human well-being, it is necessary to include mental, physical, and social health. Social health is driven by a complex set of sociocultural factors that impact an individual or community's wellness. At a macro level, it includes the cultural and political-economic forces shaping the health of individuals and communities. An individual's social health also includes the support a person receives from their extended social network, as well as the social pressures or stigma a person may face and the meaning that they ascribe to their experiences. Just as mental and physical health strongly influence one another, when a person's social health falters, their physical and/or mental health declines as well.

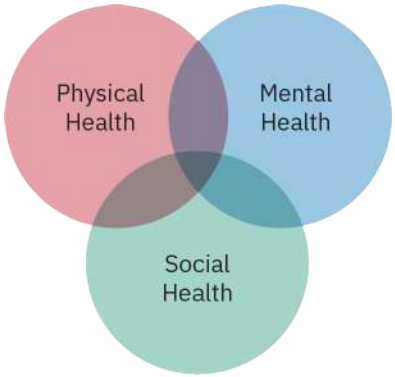

FIGURE 17.7 A person's overall health is informed by their physical health, their mental health, and their social health. When one falters, the others are affected. (credit: Copyright Rice University, OpenStax, under CC BY 4.0 license)

Physical environments—whether they are natural, constructed, or modified environments—shape cultural adaptations and behaviors. People living on islands and people living in deserts inhabit very different

environments that inform their cultures and affect their biology. On the other hand, culture often affects how humans interact with their environments. People who work in offices in Los Angeles and hunter-gatherers in the Amazon River basin interact with their environments differently, relying upon very different subsistence patterns and sets of material culture. Culture also informs human biology. Eating a lot of spicy foods changes a person's biophysiology and health outcomes, as do dietary taboos such as refusing to eat pork. These dietary choices inform biology over generations as well as within a single lifetime.

The Biocultural Approach

The **biocultural approach** to anthropology acknowledges the links between culture and biology. Biology has informed human development and evolution, including the adaptations that have made culture, language, and social living possible. Culture, in turn, informs choices that can affect our biology. The biocultural approach analyzes the interaction between culture, biology, and health. It focuses on how the environment affects us, and the connections between biological adaptations and sociocultural ones. The biocultural approach draws on biometric and ethnographic data to understand how culture impacts health. The effects of environment on biology and culture are apparent in the treatment of survivors of the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear accident that occurred in 2011 in Japan. Studies regarding the genetic health of survivors focus on the combination of environmental damage and social stigma in Japan due to their potential exposure to radiation.

Symbolic Approach

Other theoretical approaches ask different types of questions. What does it mean to be a patient? What are the social expectations for the behaviors of a person diagnosed as suffering from a particular sickness? Why is it symbolically meaningful for a treatment to be prescribed by a medical doctor? These are questions typically asked by those utilizing a **symbolic approach** to medical anthropology. The symbolic approach focuses on the symbolic thinking and beliefs of a culture and how those beliefs affect social and especially health outcomes.

A person's beliefs affect how they perceive treatments and how they experience illness. The most obvious example of the symbolic approach at work is the **placebo effect**. If a person believes that a treatment will be effective, this belief will affect their health outcome. Often in medical trials, people who believe they are receiving a treatment but are in fact receiving a placebo, such as a sugar pill, will demonstrate physiological responses similar to those receiving an active substance. Accounting for the placebo effect is an important consideration for all medical studies. The opposite of the placebo effect, the nocebo effect, occurs when a person believes they are not receiving an effective medicine or that a treatment is harmful. Common to both phenomena is the importance of meaning-centered responses to health outcomes. One of the most potent examples of this is **voodoo death**, when psychosomatic effects—that is, physical effects created by social, cultural, and behavioral factors—such as fear brought on by culture and environment cause sudden death. Related to the symbolic approach of medical anthropology is the **symbolic interaction approach** to health utilized by medical sociologists. Both approaches recognize that health and illness are socially constructed concepts. The symbolic interaction approach to health focuses on the roles of the patient, caregiver, and health care provider and the interactions that take place between people occupying these roles.

Medical Ecology

Another major medical anthropology theory is **medical ecology**. Pioneered by Paul Baker and based on his work in the Andes and American Samoa in the 1960s and 1970s, medical ecology is a multidisciplinary approach that studies the effects of environment on health outcomes. Examples of these environmental influences include food sources, environmental disasters and damage, and how environmentally informed lifestyles affect health. Whereas the biocultural approach looks at the intersection of biology and culture, medical ecology focuses instead on how environment informs both health and the culture surrounding it.

A popular example of these connections can be observed in what are termed **Blue Zones**, certain locations around the world where a significant number of people regularly live exceptionally long lives, many over a century. These communities can be found in the United States, Japan, Columbia, Italy, and Greece. Common links between people who live in these places include a high-vegetable, low-animal-product diet (eggs and fish are the exception), a lively social life and regular activity, and a strong sense of cultural identity.

A negative example of the links between environment and health can be viewed in the Flint, Michigan, water crisis. In this case, pollution of the city water system negatively affected health outcomes due to high exposure

to lead and Legionnaires' disease. Studies, including a long-term study by the National Institutes of Health, confirm that the water, central to the larger environment of Flint, negatively affected citizens of all ages, with particular harm caused to children and the elderly.

FIGURE 17.8 Okinawa is classified as a Blue Zone, indicating that there is a high concentration of people near or over 100 years old living there. The long lives of Okinawans demonstrate the contributions of diet and lifestyle to health. (Credit: "Sata angagi" by Hajime NAKANO/flickr, CC BY 2.0)

Cultural Systems Model

Culture is a chief consideration in another theory, the **cultural systems model**. Cross-cultural comparison is a core methodology for anthropology at large, and the cultural systems model is ideal for cross-cultural comparison of health systems and health outcomes. Cultures are made of various systems, which are informed by sociocultural, political-economic, and historical considerations. These systems can include health care systems, religious institutions and spiritual entities, economic organizations, and political and cultural groupings, among many others. Different cultures prioritize different systems and place greater or less value on different aspects of their culture and society. The cultural systems model analyzes the ways in which different cultures give preference to certain types of medical knowledge over others. And, using the cultural systems model, different cultures can be compared to one another.

An example of the cultural systems model at work is Tsipy Ivry's *Embodying Culture: Pregnancy in Japan and Israel* (2009), which examines pregnancy and birth in Israel and Japan. A particular focus is how state-controlled regulation of pregnancy and cultural attitudes about pregnancy affect women differently in each society. Despite both societies having socialized medicine, each prioritizes the treatment of pregnant women and the infant differently.

In the Israeli cultural model for pregnancy, life begins at a child's first breath, which is when a woman becomes a mother. Ivry describes a cultural model that is deeply impacted by anxiety regarding fetal medical conditions that are deemed outside the mother's and doctor's control. As every pregnancy is treated as high risk, personhood and attachment are delayed until birth. The state of Israel is concerned with creating a safe and healthy gene pool and seeks to eliminate genes that may be harmful to offspring; thus, the national health care system pressures women to undergo extensive diagnostic testing and terminate pregnancies that pass on genes that are linked to disorders like Tay-Sachs disease.

Japan, facing decreasing birthrates, pressures women to maximize health outcomes and forgo their own desires for the sake of the national birth rate. The cultural model for pregnancy in Japan emphasizes the importance of the mother's body as a fetal environment. From conception, it is a mother's responsibility to create a perfect environment for her child to grow. Mothers closely monitor their bodies, food intake, weight gain, and stressful interactions. In Japan, working during pregnancy is strongly discouraged. Ivry noted that

many women even quit work in preparation for becoming pregnant, whereas in Israel mothers work right up to delivery.

The cultural systems model also allows medical anthropologists to study how medical systems evolve when they come into contact with different cultures. An examination of the treatment of mental illness is a good way of highlighting this. While in the United States mental illness is treated with clinical therapy and pharmaceutical drugs, other countries treat mental illness differently. In Thailand, schizophrenia and gender dysmorphia are understood in the framework of culture. Instead of stigmatizing these conditions as illnesses, they are understood as gifts that serve much-needed roles in society. Conversely, in Japan, where psychological diagnoses have become mainstream in the last few decades and pharmaceutical treatment is more prominent than it once was, psychological treatment is stigmatized. Junko Kitanaka's work on depression in Japan highlights how people with depression are expected to suffer privately and in silence. She links this socially enforced silence to Japan's high stress rates and high suicide rates (2015). The cultural systems model offers an effective way to evaluate these three approaches toward mental illness, giving a basis of comparison between the United States, Thailand, and Japan. Assigning ethnomedicine the same value as biomedicine rather than giving one primacy over the other, this important comparative model is central to the theoretical outlook of many medical anthropologists.

FIGURE 17.9 A sign outside of Aokigahara Forest asks people to reconsider taking their own lives. This public health initiative targets the cultural tradition of people dying by suicide in the Aokigahara Forest. (Credit: "Aokigahara (suicide forest) + very tired Liz" by Liz Mc/flickr, CC BY 2.0)

The cultural systems model encompasses a myriad of cross-disciplinary techniques and theories. In many cultures, certain phrases, actions, or displays, such as clothing or amulets, are recognized as communicating a level of distress to the larger community. Examples include the practices of hanging "the evil eye" in Greece and tying a yellow ribbon around an oak tree during World War II in the United States. These practices are termed **idioms of distress**, indirect ways of expressing distress within a certain cultural context. A more psychologically driven consideration is the cause of people's behaviors, known as **causal attributions**. Causal attributions focus on both personal and situational causes of unexpected behaviors. A causal attribution for unusual behavior such as wandering the streets haplessly could be spirit possession within the context of Haitian Vodou, while in the United States behaviors such as sneezing and blowing one's nose might be attributed to someone not taking care of themselves.

Causal attributions can be important to one's own illness. Anthropologist and psychiatrist Arthur Kleinman has concluded that if doctors and caregivers were to ask their patients what *they* think is wrong with them, these explanations might provide valuable information on treatment decisions. One patient might think that their epilepsy is caused by a spirit possession. Another might suggest that their developing diabetes in inevitable because of their culture and diet. These beliefs and explanations can guide a doctor to develop effective and appropriate treatments. The approach recommended by Kleinman is known as the explanatory model. The explanatory model encourages health care providers to ask probing questions of the patient to

better understand their culture, their worldview, and their understanding of their own health.

FIGURE 17.10 The Tuskegee syphilis experiment ran for 40 years, studying untreated syphilis in Black men who believed they were receiving treatment for other illnesses. (credit: National Archives Atlanta, GA (US government)/Wikimedia Commons, Public Domain)

Political Economic Medical Anthropology

Another medical anthropology approach is **critical medical anthropology (CMA)**, which is sometimes referred to as **political economic medical anthropology (PEMA)**. Critical medical anthropology has a specific interest in the inequalities of health outcomes caused by political and economic hierarchies. Critical medical anthropology advocates for community involvement and health care advocacy as ethical obligations. Defining biomedicine as capitalist medicine, this approach is critical of the social conditions that cause disease and health inequalities and of biomedicine's role in perpetuating these systemic inequalities. CMA is also interested in the medicalization of social distress, a process that has led to a wide range of social problems and life circumstances being treated as medical problems under the purview of biomedicine.

Systemic racism and **structural violence** create many negative health outcomes. Structural violence refers to the way in which social institutions, intentionally or otherwise, harm members of some groups within the larger society. Structural violence can affect things such as life expectancy, disability, or pregnancy outcomes and can lead to distrust of medical systems. The Tuskegee syphilis study, a decades-long "experiment" that studied the long-term effects of syphilis in Black men under the guise of medical treatment, is a prime example of structural violence at work within the United States medical system. Black men involved in the study were not told they had syphilis and were denied medical treatment for decades, with most dying of the disease. The government's internal mechanisms for halting unethical studies failed to stop this experiment. It was only when public awareness of what was happening resulted in an outcry against the study that the experiments were stopped.

Another area of interest to medical anthropologists working with a CMA approach is how medical systems might be inherently biased toward or against certain segments of society. The research of anthropologist Leith Mullings demonstrated a lifelong focus on structures of inequality and resistance. Her work in Ghana examined traditional medicine and religious practice through a postcolonial lens, which was critical of the colonial legacy of structural inequality she observed. Her work in the United States also focused on health inequalities, with a special interest in the intersection of race, class, and gender for Black women in urban areas. It has been documented that some doctors in the United States regularly ignore the pain of women, and this is especially true in cases where the doctor displays racial bias. This tendency has been cited in several studies, including a study in *The New England Journal of Medicine* that found that women are more likely to be misdiagnosed for coronary heart disease based on the symptoms they give and pain levels reported (Nubel 2000). Another study in the *Journal of Pain* found that women on average reported pain 20 percent more of the

time than men and at a higher intensity (Ruau et al. 2012). Another example of research that takes a CMA approach is Khiara Bridges's 2011 *Reproducing Race*, which brings a critical lens to pregnancy as a site of racialization through her ethnography of a large New York City hospital. This medical racism contributes to the higher rates of African American infant and maternal mortality.

Merrill Singer has done work on the role of social inequalities in drug addiction and in cycles of violence. This work has led to his development of the concept of **sydnemics**, the social intersection of health **comorbidities**, or two health conditions that often occur together. For example, Japan's *hibakusha*, or atomic bomb survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, do not live as long as Japan's normally long-lived population and are more likely to develop multiple types of cancer and other diseases tied to their exposure to nuclear radiation. In addition to these health risks, they face heavy discrimination from the larger Japanese population due to misinformation regarding nuclear radiation and radiation contamination. This discrimination carries over to the descendants of *hibakusha*, who have a higher rate of cancer than the average Japanese population despite having no detectable genetic damage from the atomic bombings. Studies are ongoing as to the cultural, economic, and genetic causes of this cancer. Syndemics is highlighted in the near-century-long struggle for numerous conditions caused by the atomic bombings to be recognized as related to the atomic bombings and thus treated by the Japanese government.

Critical theories of health are an applied method, analyzing medical systems and applying critical theory, often with the goal of improving the system or improving policy. Recommendations for improvements often come out of research but may also be the starting point of a research project, as part of a data-finding mission to highlight disparity in health outcomes. Whether it is systemic racism in biomedical treatment or power discrepancies in ethnomedical rituals, critical theories of health are a key part of exploring medicine in action and understanding real medical consequences. From birth to the grave, social inequalities shape health outcomes, life expectancy, and unnecessary human suffering. Critical medical anthropology scholarship demonstrates the social forces shaping disease and health, from drug addiction to the impacts of climate change. This work becomes a self-evident call of action. It is medical anthropology in action.

PROFILES IN ANTHROPOLOGY

Angela Garcia
1971-

Personal History: Angela Garcia (https://openstax.org/r/stanford.edu) comes from a small town along the Mexican border with New Mexico. She credits her background and upbringing with inspiring much of her later work in anthropology. Her early experiences have led her to focus on places where political and cultural spheres combine, resulting in inequality and violence. Within this framework, she has focused on medicine, postcolonial theory, and feminism. She first attended the University of California, Berkeley, and then earned a PhD from Harvard University in 2007, shortly thereafter publishing her first book, *The Pastoral Clinic: Addiction and Dispossession along the Rio Grande*.

Area of Anthropology: medical anthropology, feminist anthropology

Accomplishments in the Field: *The Pastoral Clinic* analyzes heroin addiction among Hispanic populations in New Mexico's Rio Grande region. Garcia's work focuses on the political and social realities that contribute to addiction and treatment, with dispossession as a central theme. The degradation of the surrounding environment and the economic decline of the Great Recession have been important factors in determining people's life choices. Also influential has been a political reality that denies many participation or power. Garcia describes addiction as a recurring reality in the lives of many, leading them in and out of rehab in an endless cycle. Garcia also describes the damaging effects of addiction on relationships within families and communities.

Garcia joined the Department of Anthropology at Stanford University in 2016. Her work has shifted to Mexico City, where she studies coercive rehabilitation centers run by the poor. She is particularly interested in

political and criminal violence and in how informal centers like these exemplify the political and social climate within the larger Mexican nation. As much as these centers embody these realities, they also try to shift power away from pathways that lead to and encourage violence. In addition to this work, Garcia has also started examining addiction and mental illness in both Mexico and the United States Latinx (Latina/o) population.

Importance of Their Work: Garcia publishes and presents frequently in preparation for books she is currently writing. Her work is crucial to understanding dispossession and power dynamics within the United States and Mexico, including how immigration and migration affect access to health care and shape identity.

17.4 Applied Medical Anthropology

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this section, you will be able to do the following:

- Briefly explain how the biological processes of evolution and genetics impact human health and wellness.
- Describe how human migration, social behavior, and cultural values impact gene flow, genetic drift, sexual selection, and human reproduction.
- Define neuroanthropology.
- Provide two examples of culture-bound syndromes.
- Describe various ways in which political and economic forces impact health outcomes.
- Explain how globalization has increased the flow of pathogens and introduced new diseases and viruses.

FIGURE 17.11 Members of the Breathe Project, including anthropologist Ruth Fauman-Fichman (behind the speaker), protest the pollution caused by a decrepit steel mill near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. (credit: "US-Steel-Air-Pollution-1100712" Mark Dixon/flickr, CC BY 2.0)

Anthropology is an adaptable field of study. Its principles, theories, and methods can easily be applied to real-world problem-solving in diverse settings. Medical anthropology is designed to be applied to the critical study and improved practice of medicine. Medical anthropology has been employed in corporate settings, has been used by doctors who want to reduce ethnocentrism or apply a holistic approach to medical research and medical education, and has informed the work of academics who want to effect policy changes. The following are but a few examples of applied medical anthropologists working to create change in the real world.

Evolutionary Medicine and Health

A final theoretical approach to medical anthropology, emerging from biological anthropology, is **evolutionary medicine**. Evolutionary medicine sits at the intersection of evolutionary biology and human health, using the framework of evolution and evolutionary theory to understand human health. Evolutionary medicine asks why human health evolved the way it did, how environments affect health, and how we continue to affect our health through a number of factors including migration, nutrition, and epigenetics.

The story of human evolution is the story of gene flow and human migration. Each individual human carries specific gene combinations, and each human population carries with it a common set of genes. When people migrate, they bring those genes with them. If they have children, they pass those genes on in new combinations. Culture impacts population genetics in two ways: migration patterns and culturally defined rules of sexual selection impact the frequency of gene alleles**,** and thus genetic variation, in a human population. These genes often affect health outcomes, such as the likelihood of developing certain types of cancer or immunity to specific pathogens through exposure. The more frequently a human population interacts with other populations through migration, trade, and other forms of cultural exchange, the more likely it is that genetic material from one population will be introduced to the other. The current level of globalization makes it possible for genes to flow from one corner of the globe to another.

Moving into a new culture, whether forced or voluntary, requires adaptation. Adapting one's culture to new rules, new norms, and new expectations, as well as adapting one's identity to being a minority or facing oppression or prejudice, can affect the health of the migration population. An obvious example of this is the effects of slavery on Africans brought to the Americas. This impact is shown not just on their genetics, discussed elsewhere in this chapter, but also in their cultures. Syncretized religions like Haitian Vodou, Candomblé, and other African-inspired religions show the ways in which African populations adapted their beliefs to survive contact with oppression and cruelty, evolving and sanitizing certain elements while embracing others.

Populations that are physically isolated for long periods of time might experience negative effects from genetic drift as the frequency of rare alleles increases over time. Similarly, cultural groups that practice strict endogamy can experience negative effects from genetic drift. In isolation, populations can sometimes see a rise in the frequency of maladaptive gene variants, as in the case of Tay-Sachs disease found in ethnic minority populations that practice endogamy, such as Ashkenazi Jews or French Canadians. Among these populations, which have been relatively isolated from the populations around them, the genes that cause Tay-Sachs have become more common than in other populations. This suggests that isolation and segregation can result in unhealthy changes in a population's gene pool.

Another example of evolutionary medicine is the study of the effects of the development of agriculture and the growth of urbanization on human health. The development of agriculture caused human health to change in many ways. Food became more regularly available, but diet became less varied and the amount of work required to procure the food increased. The regular movement associated with a gathering and hunting lifestyle resulted in robust overall fitness, but people were also at a greater danger of succumbing to a fatal accident before reaching the age at which they successfully reproduced. Our current lifestyle, in which many sit behind a desk for eight hours a day, five days a week, damages our spines and overall health. While food availability in Western nations is second to none, people living in those societies struggle with health problems related to being overweight and underactive. Each lifestyle has its trade-offs, and evolution has, over the past ten thousand years, affected both modern and neolithic humans differently. Through evolutionary health, we can track these changes and their adaptations.

With human migration and the concentration of human populations in urban areas, disease has grown exponentially. Pathogens can now spread like wildfire across the world. In the past, disease has had a devastating effect on human populations. As just one example, the Black Death killed over a third of Europe's population, spreading via Silk Road merchants and the conquests of the Mongol Empire. Today we see yearly flare-ups of influenza and Ebola and are still dealing with the devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic that caused nations to close borders and people within nations to limit social contact with one another. Globalization not only makes it possible for pathogens and pandemics to spread, but also allows nations to cooperatively distribute vaccines and coordinate methods to contain viruses. Nations can now share medical data to help develop treatments and help one another in efforts to isolate and quarantine the sick and infected. On the other hand, international cooperation can hamper local response and prevent cities, provinces, states, and nations from acting in their own best interest.

FIGURE 17.12 World Health Organization (WHO) workers gear up to enter an Ebola ward in Lagos during the 2013–2016 Ebola pandemic. (Credit: Bryan Christensen/CDC Global/Wikimedia Commons, CC BY 2.0)

At the heart of each of these areas of study is **epigenetics**, or the change of the expression of a gene during a single human lifetime. Often prompted by environmental exposure and mutations over a lifetime, epigenetic shifts are heritable changes in a person's DNA that are phenotypical, meaning that they are linked to outwardly expressed traits. For example, studies show that people exposed to smoking in childhood tend to be shorter in adulthood. Similarly, trauma can stunt growth or increase the likelihood of developing specific maladaptations. The development of sickle cell anemia in the African American community has been linked to epigenetic adaptation to slavery in the United States, according to a 2016 study by Juliana Lindenau et al. This and other studies suggest that trauma can be inherited and can last generations. Epigenetics show evolution at work in real time, affecting both individuals and future generations.

Culture and the Brain

The human brain is a fascinating research topic, both medically and culturally. Different cultures conceptualize the brain, its functions, and its health differently. Biomedicine and ethnomedicine systems view human physiology in distinct ways, and these two systems typically have very different explanatory models for understanding the brain and its role in psychology and neurology. Anthropologists are interested in both of these explanatory models and the ways they influence treatment. Some topics of particular interest to medical anthropologists include how psychology affects biology and health, the stigma of mental health across cultures, addiction, culture-bound syndromes, and experiences and illnesses related to stress. Daniel Lende and Greg Downey brought together these topics under the heading of neuroanthropology (https://openstax.org/r/neuroanthropology), an emerging specialty that examines the relationship between culture and the brain.

As highlighted during the discussion of the cultural systems model, the acceptance of psychology is highly variable by culture. Societies that rely upon biomedicine are more apt to embrace psychological approaches to mental health problems. Encouraging other cultures to apply psychology and psychiatry sometimes requires an anthropologist's touch. One challenge for a medical anthropologist is convincing people who do not believe in mental health challenges that acknowledging and treating mental health issues is a better approach than ignoring them. India's slow but eventual acceptance of psychology is described by Rebecca Clay in a 2002 article. In this case, psychology was gradually normalized and accepted through a combination of Indian medical theory and psychological treatments and diagnoses. This culturally based path toward normalization indicates the need for cultural understanding and a nuanced approach by medical anthropologists.

Culturally specific nuance is especially important in understanding what anthropologists call culture-bound syndromes. Culture-bound syndromes refer to unique ways in which a particular culture conceptualizes the manifestations of mental illness, whether as physical and/or social symptoms. The condition is a "cultural

syndrome" in that it is not a biologically based disease identified among other populations.

A prominent example is **susto**, a syndrome in Latino societies of the Americas. First documented by Rubel, O'Nell, and Collado-Ardon (1991), susto is stress, panic, or fear caused by bearing witness to traumatic experiences happening to other people around you. Originating with Indigenous groups in the Americas, this panic attack–like illness was seen as a spiritual attack on people and has a number of symptoms ranging from nervousness and depression to anorexia and fever. Cultural syndromes are not limited to non-Western societies, however. According to anthropologist Caroline Giles Banks (1992), **anorexia nervosa**, an eating disorder where the person does not eat in order to stay thin in accordance with the beauty standards in the United States and Europe, is a prime example of a culture-bound syndrome. Only in these cultures, with specific pressures on weight and beauty applied to women and men, does anorexia nervosa appear. But as these beauty standards spread with globalization and the spread of media from these cultures, so does the disease. Cultural syndromes are not restricted to cultures that prefer biomedicine or ethnomedicine: they are as diverse as human culture itself.

A related concept gaining ground in psychology is known as **cultural concepts of distress**, or CCD. These concepts, according to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) 5, "refer to ways that cultural groups experience, understand, and communicate suffering, behavioral problems, or troubling thoughts and emotions" (American Psychiatric Association 2013). In sum, CCD is used to describe how a culture explains and conceptualizes the unique manifestation of mental illness as physical and/or social symptoms.

The **psychobiological dynamic of health**—the measurable effect of human psychology on physical health—is a primary tool used by medical anthropologists to study health. The psychobiological dynamic of health helps anthropologists evaluate the efficacy of health-related treatments that may not accord with those used in their home culture. For example, ritual healing has real measurable effects on people, both the patient and those in attendance during the ritual, as long as they believe that the ritual has healing power. Similarly, for those who share a cultural belief in the power of such practices, being prayed over by a priest or blessed with holy water can offer effective healing power. Psychological belief grants healing efficacy. The same principle applies to biomedicine, as illustrated by the placebo/nocebo effect. Of course, belief alone cannot entirely negate the harmful or helpful effects of medicine or any other substance.

Another area in which psychology and health intersect is the experience and effects of stress, a human universal. Indeed, it is well established that mental stress can make someone physically sick. The work of anthropologist Robert Sapolsky (2004) analyzes the evolution of the human body to adapt to, use, and heal from stress. His analysis suggests that stress pushes humans to both physical and mental limits, that these limits differ in different humans, and that being pushed up against limits due to stress can result in growth. The human ability to adapt to stress is a difference from other primate species, and it likely developed over millions of years of evolution. While human bodies have evolved with stress and have sometimes grown as a result of stress, we were not evolved to withstand chronic stress over extended periods of time. Chronic stress induces a high rate of stress-related diseases, such as heart disease, indicating the limits of even evolution to adapt to long-term stressors.

Addiction is another area in which medical anthropologists have done significant work, analyzing how culture and biology contribute to addiction. Addiction comes in many forms and affects multiple measures of health. Medical anthropologist Angela Garcia tackles addiction in her book *The Pastoral Clinic: Addiction and Dispossession along the Rio Grande* (2010), which explores the intersection of race, class, immigration status, and dispossession with drug addiction and the ability to treat it. Focusing on a small town on the Rio Grande and specifically a clinic within that town meant to treat addiction, she tracks the trajectory of a number of patients and the factors that contributed to their addiction. Her analysis highlights the status of these patient as immigrants, minorities, and outsiders, which prevent reentry into society for many. Similarly, João Biehl's work *Vita: Life in a Zone of Social Abandonment* (2103) analyzes the effects of dispossession and homelessness on social health, looking specifically at the role of drugs in the highlighted zone. His exploration of *vita*, a place where people are "left to die" when their addiction or mental illness becomes too much of a burden, shows the cultural effects of mental health and addiction on Brazilian society and the struggles of the individuals abandoned there. In both works, the role of drugs is highlighted, exploring how cultures

symbolically characterize problematic drug use and addiction and attach a stigma to admitting a problem and seeking treatment. The works also explore how drugs are justified and understood, illustrating both how drugs change the biochemistry of the brain and how the human mind characterizes the drugs, each shaping one another.

Reproduction

Reproductive health is another area in which medical anthropologists have made significant contributions by applying their knowledge and methods to real medical practices. Medical anthropologists have studied reproduction in many cultures, analyzing the practices, beliefs, and treatment of those who are pregnant, their children, and their supporting network. Another area of interest has been the ritualization of pregnancy. Robbie Davis Floyd (2004) has done work on birth as a rite of passage and the role of the midwife in modern birth practices around the world, with a focus on medicalized birth in the United States. Her work highlights ways in which the experience of birth is made more complicated by policy. Midwives are shown to decrease the chances of complications in births, yet in many places they are denied a role in the birthing process. Regardless of patient preference and the documented success of midwives, in most settings in the United States doctors and medical professionals are given preference over midwives. Floyd argues that this preference sometimes puts the patient at risk. In the Western biomedical system, doctors are preferred and imbued with **authoritative knowledge**, which is a sense of legitimacy or perceived authenticity.

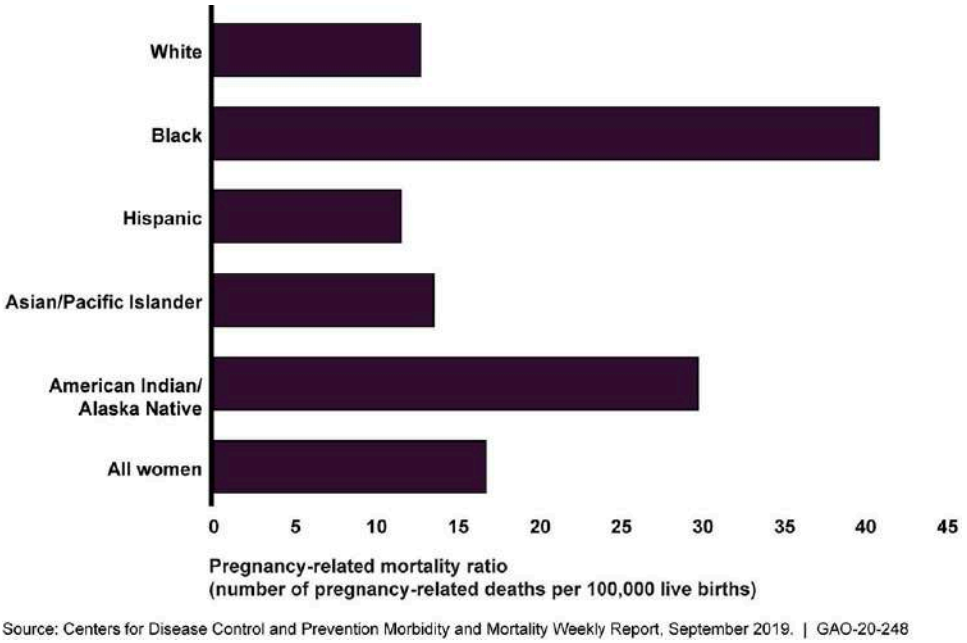

FIGURE 17.13 Women of color are much more likely to die in childbirth, according to a 2019 study by the CDC. This disparity is a central focus of the research of Dána-Ain Davis. (credit: "Figure 1: Pregnancy-Related Deaths per 100,000 Live Births by Racial/Ethnic Group, 2007-2016" by US Government Accountability Office (GAO)/flickr, Public Domain)

The work of Dána-Ain Davis (2019) on medical racism and inequalities in the health care system shows structural violence at work. Based on analysis of statistics and vivid ethnographic examples, Davis found that women of color experienced significantly higher rates of complications, including higher death rates for both mothers and infants, than White mothers and babies. Davis concludes that cultural bias and systemic racism are woven into the US health care system. These are often unacknowledged biases, unrecognized by those perpetrating them in the medical profession. Davis advocates for better policy to address these inequalities and help mothers maintain control over their bodies and the birthing process.

PROFILES IN ANTHROPOLOGY

Dána-Ain Davis
1958-

Personal History: Born in New York City, Dána-Ain Davis (https://openstax.org/r/danaaindavis) earned her PhD from City University of New York. Her work focuses on poverty, policy, and feminism, with a specific interest in urban areas of the United States. She is currently a professor of anthropology at Queens College (part of the City University of New York system). In addition to her teaching, she promotes change in policy and society through activism and her work in numerous political communities.

Before enrolling in college, Davis worked widely in publishing, broadcasting, and nonprofit work. She has worked for the *Village Voice* newspaper, the YWCA, the Village Center for Women, and Bronx AIDS Service. This work grounded her deeply in her community and the issues facing women, and in particular Black women in urban communities such as hers. These skills would aid her as she earned her PhD and began publishing her academic work.

She is the editor of *Feminist Anthropology*, a new journal focused on feminist anthropological work; sits on the editorial boards for *Cultural Anthropology* and *Women's' Studies Quarterly*; and in the fall of 2021 became the chair of her department.

Area of Anthropology: cultural anthropology, medical anthropology, public anthropology, feminist anthropology, urban anthropology

Accomplishments in the Field: Davis's first book, *Battered Black Women and Welfare Reform: Between a Rock and a Hard Place*, was published in 2006 and focuses on the intersection of gender, race, and economic realities. The book also features her work with the theory of **political economy**, which looks at how economic conditions, law, and policy affect wealth distribution across groups, in this case how economic conditions disadvantage Black women. Davis then worked on two edited volumes focused on feminism and gender, entitled *Black Genders and Sexualities* (2012) and *Feminist Activist Ethnography: Counterpoints to Neoliberalism in North America* (2013), before publishing *Feminist Ethnography: Thinking through Methodologies, Challenges, and Possibilities* (2016) about feminism anthropology and ethnographic work.

Davis's next work, *Reproductive Injustice: Racism, Pregnancy, and Premature Birth* (2019) fits more squarely into the realm of medical anthropology. This work examines the numerous issues that face women of color in regard to pregnancy and birth. Like her previous work, her latest book intersects with activism, aiming to improve medical and social justice for mothers and children.

Importance of Their Work: Activism sits at the heart of Davis's work, which has won numerous awards for promoting justice and change. Her academic and activist work has helped inform new policy changes at the local, state, and national levels. Her work informs continuing work in urban studies, feminist theory and practice, reproductive health for women of color, and welfare reform.

The Inequalities of Health

Attempting to address the inequalities of health care is a primary application of the work of critical medical anthropologists. Inequalities are apparent in relation to COVID-19, the global pandemic that has left no corner of the world untouched. A number of agencies in the United States, including the National Institutes of Health and the American Civil Liberties Union, have determined that Black and Latinx populations have been most negatively affected by the virus, both in health outcomes and overall deaths per capita relative to their portion of the population. Several states have emphasized the need to ignore personal safety for the sake of economic "health," essentially stating a willingness to sacrifice workers so their economic prospects do not falter. Meanwhile, people working on the front lines faced what is tantamount to class violence, as they could not afford to stay safely at home and social distance; indeed, it can be argued that later this class violence still applied, as the divide between remote working and those forced to work on-site created a stark contrast. The

health of "essential workers" is put at risk. Aside from health care professionals, the category frequently falls along class lines, with the majority of "essential workers" employed in the service industry, in factories, or making deliveries. Economic inequalities and lack of access to health care providers both play a role in these trends. Similarly, the World Health Organization has highlighted how poorer countries have had their access to the many forms of COVID-19 treatment and prevention restricted by the demands of richer countries like the United States and Australia.

Another area in which medical anthropologists have documented health-related inequalities in the United States is access to nutritious foods. It has been well established that poor access to foods, particularly highly nutritious, diverse foods, can negatively affect health. People who live in food deserts, which are areas lacking access to good food, are more likely to develop debilitating illnesses and suffer from a basic lack of nutrition in several major fields. Amplifying the effect of food deserts is that these same areas often also lack access to health care services.

AIDS has provided a multigenerational study of the inequalities of health. At the beginning of the AIDS pandemic in the 1980s, the poorly understood disease was stated to be a "gay man's virus" because it seemed to only affect gay and bisexual men. Medical anthropologists began studying the AIDS virus as early as 1983, with Norman Spencer notably studying cases in San Francisco. As the virus spread to other populations, research became more common and well-funded, receiving state support in some cases. Yet between poor and late funding and the spread of misinformation that took decades to reverse, AIDS devastated populations around the world. Medical anthropologist Brodie Ramin (2007) has applied anthropological knowledge and methods to AIDS treatment in Africa, utilizing cultural understanding to develop more effective methods of medical treatment and enhance public trust in these treatment methods.

FIGURE 17.14 Partners in Health began treating HIV in Haiti at a time when world governments largely ignored it. Here, they offer help during the 2010 Haitian earthquake. (credit: "CG Officer works with Interpreter to Help Haitians" by Petty Officer 2nd Class Etta Smith/USCG Press/flickr, CC BY 2.0)

Even today, AIDS is highly stigmatized and poorly treated in many places in the world. For over two decades now, Paul Farmer and Jim Yong Kim, both anthropologists and medical doctors, have worked with their organization, Partners in Health, to provide better health outcomes and access to poor, remote parts of the world. Their work has been instrumental in helping treat AIDS and other diseases in places such as Haiti. Jim Yong Kim used his role in the World Bank Group to help create better outcomes as well. Medical anthropology has the power to shape policy at the highest level of global health institutions, but it has much to overcome. Medical anthropologists are well aware of the severity of the problems of structural violence, systemic racism, and massive health inequalities around the world.

The COVID-19 pandemic changed many aspects of many cultures, affecting people's professional, educational, and personal lives. Medical anthropologists Vincanne Adams and Alex Nading have already begun to analyze the social impact of COVID-19: "The pandemic continues to precipitate simultaneous dread over what is to

come and loss over what appears to be gone forever, including loved ones, ways of life, and conceptual and literal safety nets" (2020). The COVID-19 pandemic has illustrated how deeply intertwined health and culture can be. Elisa J. Sobo's work on the anti-vaccine movement in 2016 is now freshly relevant, as some people fear and mistrust both the COVID vaccine and the health measures to slow or prevent the spread of the virus proposed by nonprofits and governments. Adams and Nading build upon Sobo's research, exploring the central role of belief and culture in the development of policy at the local, state, national, and international levels during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The COVID-19 pandemic has illustrated how deeply intertwined health and culture can be. Medical anthropology has a lot to offer public health and health care professionals. Incorporating medical anthropology and cultural competence into the training of health care professionals is a proactive step to begin addressing medical racism and the inequalities of health documented by medical anthropologists. It also gives health care professionals insight into the relationship between social health and physical and mental health priorities. The work of medical anthropologists on nutrition, reproduction, and infectious disease has significant implications for health care and public policy. Finally, understanding the wealth of cultural traditions and ethnomedical systems provides a greater appreciation for the diverse ways of understanding health and managing maladies. As the COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated, health and health care are a complex social issue with global ramifications for billions of people.

MINI-FIELDWORK ACTIVITY

Health Perspectives Project: Interviews

Part 1: Develop Interview Questions

Select a health-related topic and develop ethnographic interview questions related to it. Keep it short: three to five questions relating to the anthropological topic you wish to study. Ideally, your interview questions will be open-ended rather than yes/no questions or questions that generate one word replies.

Part 2: Interview

Select appropriate people to interview, and set up a convenient time and place to interview them. Remember your safety is a top concern; do not meet with anyone in a place where you do not feel comfortable. Ideally, if you do not know the person well, you will want a public location that still affords a degree of privacy, such as the library or a coffee shop.

Interview Field Notes

Your notes should include the following:

- When and where the interview was conducted
- Your relationship to the interviewee (if any)
- The interviewee's
  - Age
  - Gender
  - Occupation
  - Native language
  - Nationality/country of origin
- Any other details that are relevant to your interview (Example: religion, sexuality, race/ethnicity, role in family, etc. Only ask these if it seems to be relevant to your topic and questions.)

Take notes not only on what the person said, but how they said it and what you think it might mean in a broader context. Reflect on body language, emotion, tone, and emphasis whenever possible.

Include significant quotes and your reflection on the quotes' significance in the context of the interview.

Explain why and how you selected the person that you interviewed. Do you think that you had the necessary rapport to receive full and honest answers? Was your interviewee knowledgeable about the topic of your interview? What additional questions might you want to ask in the future?

Reflect on your experience and what you might do differently next time.

Resources: Explore Medical Anthropology

- Culturally Connected (https://openstax.org/r/culturallyconnected) is an excellent educational resource for health care professionals that draws heavily on medical anthropology.
- Neuroanthropology (https://openstax.org/r/neuroanthropology) is a collaborative weblog created to encourage an interdisciplinary exchange.
- Somatosphere (https://openstax.org/r/somatosphere) is an online forum for debate and discussion in medical anthropology.
- Anthrolactology (https://openstax.org/r/anthrolactology) is a podcast series on anthropology, breastfeeding, science, and society.

Key Terms

anorexia nervosa a culture-bound syndrome present in North American and European cultures, characterized by a person not eating to meet beauty standards.

authoritative knowledge authority derived from perceived legitimacy, dependent on culture.

biocultural approach the assumption that culture is informed by physical and sociocultural elements.

biomedicine health care systems rooted in European and North American scientific knowledge.

Blue Zones communities around the world with a high concentration of people near or over the age of 100.

causal attributions a psychological concept used to study regular cultural behavior and how deviation from that behavior might be explained.

clinical observations an ethnographic method resulting in a straightforward, clinical study of a medical situation.

comorbidities two or more health conditions that often occur together.

critical medical anthropology (CMA) a theory that highlights a culture's inequalities, including inequalities in health care.

critical theories of health an applied theory aimed at pointing out issues within health care systems and changing them for the better.

cultural concepts of distress (CCD) a psychological term used to describe the way a culture experiences and expresses distress.

cultural systems model a theory that that analyzes how systems within a particular culture, including health care systems, affect one's worldview and actions.

disease a biological agent that negatively affects health.

epigenetics the changes in gene expression that take place during a person's lifetime, often through environmental exposure.

ethnomedicine a culture's traditional knowledge and treatments for the management of health and illness.

evolutionary medicine a method that uses evolutionary biology and culture to better understand human health.

health a state of complete well-being.

health decision-making analysis a study of the decisions that go into a person's health choices.

idioms of distress indirect ways that members of a culture show distress.

illness a person's experience of ill health, as defined by their culture.

illness narrative interviews an ethnographic method used to collect information about an informant's illness experience in their own words.

malady a term encompassing disease, illness, and sickness.

medical ecology a multidisciplinary theory studying the effects of environment on lifestyle and health.

medical pluralism the use of both ethnomedicine and biomedicine.

medical statistics statistics regarding treatments for medical illnesses that inform an anthropologist's study, as well as medical policy and health choices.

participant observation a methodology in which the anthropologist makes first-person observations while participating in a culture.

placebo effect the effect in which belief in a treatment's efficacy creates a positive health outcome.

political economic medical anthropology (PEMA) a theory that highlights a culture's inequalities, including inequality in health care.

political economy the connection of economics and politics and how they affect wealth and inequality.

psychobiological dynamic of health the measurable effect of human psychology on human biology.

sick roles the social expectation of a person suffering from a sickness.

sickness the cause of a person's ill health that signifies to others how to treat that person socially.

social health an acknowledgement that one's social interactions and standing are an important aspect of overall health.

structural violence violence caused by political and social systems that prevent groups from taking care of themselves in multiple ways.

susto a cultural response to stress and trauma in Latinx communities.

symbolic approach a theory focusing on how a culture's symbols affect social and health outcomes.

symbolic interaction approach to health and approach that focuses on the interaction between patient and caregiver(s).

syndemics the social intersection of comorbidities

in health outcomes.

traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) traditional knowledge of one's environment applied to the treatment of maladies.

voodoo death death brought on by psychosomatic belief in cultural and environmental effects.

Summary

Medical anthropology is the application of anthropological practice and methods to medicine. It considers how culture affects medicine and health. Medical anthropologists thus try to study medicine and health within the context of the culture it comes from, which is known as ethnomedicine. The history of medical anthropology stems from numerous other branches of anthropology, including religious anthropology and the study of rituals and health. Since World War II, anthropologists have often been involved in health initiatives around the world, with numerous health practitioners using anthropological methods to increase their efficacy.

Medical anthropological theory and practice is rooted in the work of Franz Boas. Medical anthropologists utilize various methods to gather data and study a culture's dimensions of health. In participant observation, an anthropologist takes part in the culture they are studying. Ethnographic interviews ask questions of cultural informants regarding their understanding of their culture's medical practices. Similarly, in illness narrative interviews, a person who has been ill is asked to describe their experience, both of being sick and how others treated them. Another method is to examine the choices people make when seeking medical treatment, a process called a health decision-making analysis. Anthropologists also use a number of quantitative methods, focusing on medical statistics, questionnaires, and surveys.

Medical anthropology embraces a number of theories. The biocultural approach analyzes the links between culture and biology, using aspects such as environment to understand how medicine and the culture around it develops. The symbolic approach to medical anthropology looks at the world of symbols that surrounding health and medicine in a particular culture, including the placebo effect and specific cultural phenomena such as "voodoo death." Medical ecology suggests that environment affects the development of culture and thus of medicine. The cultural systems model is a theory used for cross-cultural analysis, creating a frame of reference for comparison and looking at why certain cultures prefer certain types of knowledge. Critical medical anthropology (CMA) analyzes how social inequalities in a culture affect health outcomes. Critical theories of health apply medical anthropology theory and method to medical practice with the aim of changing medical policy at multiple levels.

Medical anthropology, perhaps more than any other type of anthropology, is easily applied to other fields. Medical practitioners apply anthropological theory and methods to better understand their patients and improve their health outcomes. Evolutionary medicine studies how humans have evolved with the goal of better treating illness. This requires a fusion of biological anthropology, genetics, and globalization. Medical anthropologists also work within neuroanthropology, combining psychology, neurology, and human biology to understand and improve human physical and mental health outcomes. Reproductive health is improved with an understanding of medical anthropology, as culture is highly important to birth and childcare.

Inequalities of health are a particularly important place for the application of the work of medical anthropologists. From food deserts to the AIDS epidemic, medical anthropologists have applied their work to solving real-world problems and innovated novel solutions that could later be applied to other problems, such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

Critical Thinking Questions

1. How do anthropologists navigate cultural definitions of health, sickness, and illness?
2. How was the development of medical anthropology aided by the anthropology of religion?
3. In what ways does understanding culture help caregivers determine the best treatment for their patients?
4. Why must medical anthropologists balance objective and subjective understandings of health with regard to culture?
5. How do social inequalities influence the spread of disease and impact health outcomes?
6. How have physical isolation and cultural

traditions of endogamy impacted the frequency of inheritable diseases?

7. In what ways do human migrations affect the development of human health, historically and currently?
8. How do political and economic forces affect health outcomes around the world?

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CHAPTER 18
Human-Animal Relationship

Figure 18.1 The relationships between humans and animals form a core part of all human cultures. Here, a man in Delhi sits beside his calf on a city street. (credit: "Mahimsyat sarva bhutani (veda)" by Abdel Sinoctou/Wikimedia Commons, Public Domain)

CHAPTER OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION Take a moment to consider your relationships with animals. Where do you interact with animals? Do you encounter them on your plate, in your home, on your walks or visits to zoos and aquariums, in your vaccines and medical procedures, in your body lotion, or in the clothing or shoes you wear? Or do you encounter them mostly in books, movies, and poems?

Human-animal scholarship is a relatively new *interdisciplinary* specialty. Interdisciplinary specialties cross individual disciplinary boundaries, drawing on perspectives and theories from multiple academic areas, most commonly anthropology, sociology, psychology, biology, philosophy/ethics, and even economics. When we consider the multiple roles that animals play in human lives, it is easy to see how this topic intersects with so many disciplines: the breeding and care of animals is associated with biology; the use of therapy dogs in human populations, such as with prisoners or those suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), is associated with psychology; and the ways in which different cultural groups think about and use animals is an

anthropological concern. As a result, human-animal scholars take an interdisciplinary approach to preparing for and conducting their research to better understand the relationships among humans, animals, and culture.

18.1 Humans and Animals

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Restate the scientific meaning of *animal*.
- Describe the human-animal continuum.
- Define multispecies ethnography.
- Identify highlights in the domestication of dogs.

The Human-Animal Continuum

Nonhuman animals are part of many facets of our lives. Many people rely on animals as part of food and subsistence systems, particularly in the areas of hunting, herding, and agriculture. Some people worship deities who are all or part animal. Many people recognize animals as symbols of clans or sports teams. For example, did your school have an animal as the mascot for its sports or debate teams? Across cultures, people love animals as pets and companions, and, as recognized by evolutionary theory, humans are connected to animals as ancestors and relatives. Animals are integral parts of the lives of humans around the world, in which they play a variety of roles. Defining an animal, however, can be complicated.

With some exceptions, an **animal** is defined in science as a multicellular organism, either vertebrate or invertebrate, that can breathe, move, ingest and excrete food and food products, and reproduce sexually. This clearly also includes the human species. Western philosophical tradition supports this inclusion. The Greek philosopher Aristotle (384–322 BCE) grouped animals as being *blooded* (e.g., humans, mammals, birds, fish), *non-blooded* (e.g., shelled animals, insects, soft-skinned sea animals), or what he called *dualizers*, with mixed characteristics (e.g., whales, who live in the sea but have live births; bats, who have four legs but fly). Aristotle classified humans as animals with the intellectual ability to reason. In 1735, Swedish botanist Carolus Linnaeus introduced his *binomial classification*, which used two terms to identify every living organism: a genus and a species designation. In his work *Systema Naturae* (1735), Linnaeus divided the living world into two large kingdoms, the *Regnum Animale* (animal kingdom) and the *Regnum Vegetabile* (plant kingdom). Like Aristotle before him, Linnaeus classified humans as animals. Today, the scientific approach to the study of the animal kingdom accepts that there is a continuum between all living animal species with grades of difference between species. However, even though humans are animals, people across cultures define themselves as separate from animals.

French anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss (1908–2009) argued that cultures universally define themselves in opposition to what they view as **nature**, a domain they define as outside or on the margins of human culture. Humans and human culture are typically seen as everything that is *not* nature or animal. This makes animals and nature very important concepts to human societies, because they shed light on how people think of themselves as human beings in the world. Lévi-Strauss famously said of animals that they are "good to think" (1963, 89), meaning that animals provide good ways for humans to think about *themselves*. Animals are used as symbols in all cultures, a sign of the human tendency to identify similarities and differences between ourselves and (other) animals.

In all societies, culture plays an important role in shaping how people define animals. Cultures assign various meanings to animals; they are ancestral spirits or deities, companions, work animals, wild and dangerous creatures, and even objects on display in zoos or raised in factory farms for food. Think of American culture, which both loves and dotes on dogs as members of the family and raises pigs as a food commodity. In other cultures, dogs are considered a food species. Among the North American Lakota people, dog meat is considered a medicinal food (see Meyers and Weston 2020), and in Vietnam, specially designated restaurants serve dog meat as a male aphrodisiac (Avieli 2011). To further illustrate the blurring of boundaries between categories of animals, some species of pigs, such as the potbellied pig, are kept as family pets in the United States. How do cultures designate species as being one thing and not another?

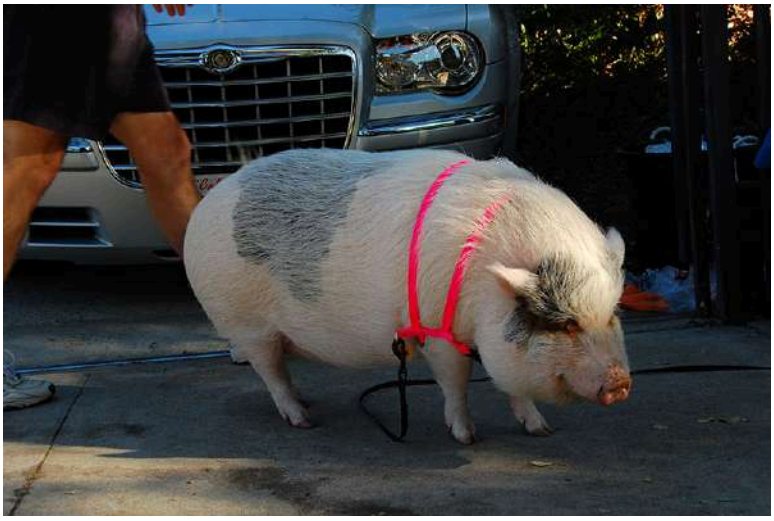

FIGURE 18.2 Potbellied pigs are kept as pets in some countries. Here, a pet pig is ready for a walk in her neighborhood. (credit: "Potbellied Pig!" by Eric Chan/flickr, CC BY 2.0)

The study of group identity is central to anthropology. Different cultures distinguish what is animal from what is human by comparing "the other" with themselves. Sometimes called *us versus them*, *we versus they*, or even *the Other*, capitalized, this binary (two-component) comparison is a human tendency observed across cultures.

It is common for cultural groups to distinguish between humans and nonhuman species and also to designate some humans as "other" and not as fully human—comparable to animals or even isolated parts of animals. In the Andes, indigenous Quechua and Aymara speakers refer to themselves as *runa*, meaning "people" or "humans." Those who do not speak their languages and do not live in the Andes are, by extension, nonhuman and are typically referred to as *q'ara*, meaning literally "naked and bare," referring to their lack of social ties and community (Zorn 1995). This distinction between those within the group and those without is common among Indigenous groups all over the world as well as within Western societies. Although the origin of the word *frogs* as an epithet (nickname) for the French is contested, it appears to have begun within France itself as a way of referring to people who lived in Paris and ate frog legs. By the late 18th century, however, *frogs* had begun to show up in English newspapers and other written sources as a pejorative, insulting term for all French people (Tidwell 1948). Not to be outdone, the French have traditionally referred to the English as *rosbifs* (roast beefs), a food common in English cuisine.

Although these examples are relatively lighthearted, there is a dark side to human-animal imagery. In a recent book, German freelance journalist Jan Mohnhaupt (2020) examines the distorted relationships that some Nazi leaders had with animals. After coming to power in Germany in 1937, the Nazi state enacted many laws against the Jewish people, among them a 1942 law that made it illegal for Jewish people to own pets, while Nazi leader Adolf Hitler doted on his dog and military commander Hermann Göring kept lions as pets. Preventing them from having companion animals was yet another way in which the Nazis sought to dehumanize Jewish people. Human-animal relationships are important to our sense of selfhood.

In this chapter, we will explore various cultures' approaches to and understandings of nonhuman animals, including both living and symbolic animals, and the diverse ways in which humans interact with and think about these "other" beings.

Multispecies Ethnography

In his essay "Why Look at Animals?," English art critic and poet John Berger writes, "To suppose that animals first entered the human imagination as meat or leather or horn is to project a 19th century attitude backwards across the millennia. Animals first entered the imagination as messengers and promises" ([1980] 1991, 4). Recent trends in anthropological scholarship attempt to interact with these messengers and understand the relationship that humans and animals share. The term **polyspecific** refers to the interactions of multiple species. The relationships shared between humans and other species began with our ancestors millions of

years ago.

The specialty of human-animal studies within anthropology suggests new forms of scholarship that deliberately move away from **anthropocentrism**, which focuses on humans as if they are the only species that matters. Human-animal studies opens a window into different ways of thinking about what it means to be human. One approach within the specialty, called **multispecies ethnography**, pays careful attention to the interactions of humans and other species within their shared environment—whether those other species be plant, animal, fungal, or microbial. Multispecies ethnographies are especially focused on the study of **symbiosis**, which is a mutually beneficial relationship between species.

Researchers conducting multispecies ethnographies utilize a broad, holistic approach that takes into account questions such as where and how interactions between humans and animals occur. This approach is more complex than traditional ethnography because it requires that the researcher acknowledge both the perspectives of nonhuman actors and their roles in how we see and understand ourselves.

Cultural anthropologists and ecologists Kirill Istomin and Mark James Dwyer (2010) conducted multispecies ethnographies between two different herding populations in Russia: the Izhma Komi, who live in northeast European Russia, and the Nenets in western Siberia. The two groups live in environments that are comparable in terms of geography, average temperatures, and precipitation, and they herd the same subspecies of reindeer year-round. Yet their herding styles are completely different. The Izhma Komi divide their reindeer into two large groups: a family group consisting of non-castrated males, females, and calves, called a *kör*, and a group of castrated males used for transportation and hauling, called a *byk*. Herders accompany the two groups to two separate grazing grounds during the day and direct them back to camp at night. While foraging for food, the reindeer stay within their particular groups and do not wander away. In contrast, the Nenets allow their reindeer to freely disperse and wander during the day, only occasionally observing their general whereabouts and well-being. Unlike the Izhma Komi herds, which stay in their two large groups, the Nenets animals forage in smaller groups and reunite at night as a single herd when they return on their own to camp for protection. Unlike wild reindeer, who do not routinely live in and around human encampments, these groups have a *symbiotic relationship* with their herders. The humans get meat, some limited milk, and leather for clothing, shoes, and trade products from the reindeer, and the reindeer get protection and supplemental foods at the campsite from the herders.

Istomin and Dwyer's research notes behaviors that the reindeer have learned from their human herders, but it also addresses social learning *within* the herds. In their interviews with the researchers, both Izhma Komi and Nenets herders told stories about the difficulties they faced when introducing new, so-called unmanageable animals into the herds. These new animals had not yet learned the herding routines of the group they were joining. Some wandered off and were lost before they could adapt to the particular herd culture. Istomin and Dwyer conclude that the animals *themselves* pass along behavioral knowledge to each other across generations as offspring follow and learn from their mothers and other adult reindeer. This conclusion challenges the notion that animal behavior is solely genetic and instinctual. Expanding ethnographies to include an understanding of what animals are doing and thinking is a primary objective of multispecies ethnography.

Despite its recent emergence in anthropology as a separate specialty, the multispecies perspective has a long history. Nineteenth-century amateur anthropologist Lewis Henry Morgan's research on the North American beaver (1868), which includes material on beavers' adaptation to and interaction with humans, remains one of the most insightful and perceptive works on the species. And the research conducted in the 1930s by British anthropologist Edward Evans-Pritchard on the relationship between the Nuer people of Africa and their cattle resulted in an ethnographic account of their interdependence, both socially and economically.

More recently, cultural anthropologist Darrell Posey used a multispecies ethnographic approach in his work "Wasps, Warriors, and Fearless Men" (1981). In this case, the relationships of interest are between humans and insects. Posey's work utilizes a lens of *ethnoentomology*, exploring the relationships that the Kayapó people of central Brazil have with local insects and how these relationships shape their perception of themselves as human. Posey documents how Kayapó warriors deliberately provoke a local species of wasp to sting them, using the "secret" of the venom to become more powerful:

The warriors dance at the foot of the scaffolding and sing of the secret strength they received from the wasps to defeat the giant beetle. The women wail ceremonially in high-pitched, emotional gasps as the warriors, two-by-two, ascend the platform to strike with their bare hands the massive hive. Over and over again they strike the hive to receive the stings of the wasps until they are semi-conscious from the venomous pain.

This ceremony is one of the most important to the Kayapo: it is a re-affirmation of their humanity, a statement of their place in the universe, and a communion with the past. (172)

FIGURE 18.3 Kayapó tribespeople continue to practice their cultural traditions while fighting to protect their ancestral lands from Western encroachment. One of these traditions involves deliberately provoking wasps to sting them in order to enter a sacred state. (credit: "VI Aldeia Multiétnica no XV Encontro de Culturas Tradicionais da Chapada dos Veadeiros" by Oliver Kornblihtt/Special Secretariat of Culture of the Ministry of Citizenship/flickr, CC BY 2.0)

A Case Study: Domestication of Dogs

Humans interact with and relate to animal species that live in the wild as well as those that depend on them for their survival. Animals that are dependent on human beings are typically the result of **domestication**. Evidence suggests that early humans quickly developed a clear understanding of how selective breeding works, encouraging animals that shared preferred characteristics to mate and produce offspring. These desired traits included a calm temperament; the ability to get along with **conspecifics**, or members of one's own species; usually a smaller body so that the animal could be gathered or herded in larger numbers; and an attachment to or tolerance of humans.

FIGURE 18.4 Dogs were among the earliest domesticated animals. Here, Siberian huskies race in a dogsledding event. Across cultures, dogs have been used for pulling and hauling loads. (credit: "Frauenwald,

Hundeschlittenrennen, 6" by Rainer Lippert, edited by Ritchyblack/Wikimedia Commons, Public Domain)

The dog (*Canis lupus familiaris*) is believed to have been among the earliest animal domesticates, possibly the first. The origins of the domesticated dog are controversial. Most scientists agree that dogs originated from wolves, particularly from the subspecies *Canis lupus pallipes* (Indian wolf) and *Canis lupus lupus* (Eurasian wolf). The wide variety among dog breeds indicates that other wolf subspecies were also involved in selective breeding, making today's dogs animal hybrids.

Wolves have various natural instincts that make them excellent candidates for domestication. They are highly social scavengers who could easily have become accustomed to human settlements and food handouts at a young age, and they have a hierarchical social structure that includes status and submission within the pack, traits that would predispose them to conforming to human direction and domination. Dogs today vary genetically by only about 0.2 percent from some of their ancestral wolf subspecies.

Historically and cross-culturally, humans benefit in many ways from their relationships with dogs:

- *Guarding and protection.* Dogs are naturally territorial and highly social; they are both biologically and behaviorally prone to be keenly aware of their physical surroundings and their group (or pack). The impulse to guard and protect is a genetic trait that was easily manipulated in the species as humans selectively bred animals that were particularly loyal to their families and attentive to their property. As part of the domestication process, humans selected for dogs who exhibited a *bark-howl* response when alerted, with the result that domesticated dogs bark when concerned or excited. Among wolves, the bark is only used as an initial alert (Yin 2002). Wolves do not call attention to themselves as dogs do.
- *Hunting.* Descended as it is from a wild predator, the domestic dog can be an excellent hunter and retriever. A trained dog offers considerable benefits to humans in the hunting of prey. Some Indigenous groups, such as the Chono of Tierra del Fuego, Argentina, trained their dogs to dive and to fish for seals. The Tahltan people of Canada used dogs on bear hunts. In czarist Russia, borzoi dogs were used to hunt for wolves.
- *Herding.* Dogs were key to the development of pastoralism, a subsistence system based on herding animals. Many pastoral societies utilized dogs as shepherds for domesticated herds of sheep, goats, cattle, and even fowl. Once trained to identify and protect its herd, a dog can be a fierce defender of and guide for animals foraging away from human settlements. Trained herding dogs can shepherd their flocks on a consistent trail without constant human surveillance. Selective breeding moderated a natural instinct in dogs referred to as *eye-stalk-chase-bite*, a sequence of steps utilized by dogs to focus on another animal when hunting. This moderated instinct enables dogs to guide and protect another species by keeping the animals rounded up and moving away from danger. While not utilized by every pastoral society, dogs are considered vital to most pastoral societies, even today (see the Ethnographic Sketch at the end of the chapter).
- *Transportation.* Historically, dogs served as beasts of burden, especially in cultures that had no larger domesticated animals such as the horse, donkey, or cow. Many Indigenous peoples used dogs to carry young children or possessions. Among North American Indigenous cultures such as the Assiniboine, Apache, and Inuit, dogs were traditionally used for transportation. Some of these groups developed specialized technology, such as the travois and the sledge, that allowed them to harness a dog to a platform loaded with items to be moved.

FIGURE 18.5 Kainai women use dog travois, constructed of two shafts lashed to a platform, to carry their possessions. This photo was taken around 1910 in what is now southern Alberta, Canada. (credit: "Kainai Women and Dog Travois" by Provincial Archives of Alberta/Wikimedia Commons, Public Domain)

- *Meat.* In some cultures, domesticated dogs offer a dependable source of meat. Some of the earliest evidence of dog eating was found at a prehistoric rock shelter site located at Hinds Cave, Texas. At the Hinds Cave site, geneticist Raul Tito and his team identified domesticated dog remains in human coprolites (fossilized feces) dating to 9260 BP. From the Preclassic through the late Postclassic period (2000 BCE–1519 CE) in what is now Mexico, various Indigenous cultures, including the Olmec, Zapotec, Aztec, and Maya, raised and consumed dogs as a source of protein (Thompson 2008), eventually developing a hairless breed of dog known today as the Xoloitzcuintli. This breed existed when the Spanish arrived in Mexico in the 16th century.

FIGURE 18.6 The Xoloitzcuintli is a hairless dog first bred in Mexico. (credit: "MX MM XOLOITZCUINTLE" Milton Martínez/Secretariat of Culture of Mexico City/flickr, CC BY 2.0)

Although dogs are primarily pets in contemporary societies, they continue to play other important roles in a wide range of human activities. As just a few examples, dogs are used as drug detectives at airports, therapy animals for a wide range of human needs, and guides and helpers for those living with physical challenges. Dogs also continue to be used as shepherds, hunting companions, and guards.

18.2 Animals and Subsistence

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Describe the role empathy plays in human-animal relations.
- Identify some characteristics of the ways that Indigenous hunter-gatherers and nomadic pastoralists relate to animals.
- Discuss the relationship between Rock Cree hunters and animals.

Human-Animal Empathy in Subsistence

One of the most important relationships between humans and animals is that centered on subsistence, the means by which a group of individuals makes a living. In hunting-and-gathering and **pastoral societies**, the relationships between humans and animals are critical to human survival. Serving as meat, tools for hunting and for herding other animal species, and sources of commodities such as wool and leather, these societies' animals are central to human lives. In such societies, human relationships with animals are typically characterized by **animal empathy**, or the sense of being attuned to the feelings or experiences of other beings—in this case, animals. Elaborate beliefs and rituals surrounding human-animal interdependence are common among hunter-gatherers and pastoralists.

The research of anthropologist Pat Shipman ([2015] 2017) suggests that human empathy and alliances with animals, especially dogs, gave humans an evolutionary advantage over animals. Relying on animals for survival prompted humans to develop not only improved hunting and meat-processing tools but also a deep understanding of their prey. Humans needed to be able to discern and predict animal behaviors, including migratory patterns. By the emergence of our species, *Homo sapiens*, some 300,000 years ago, humans had evolved to have a sophisticated empathic understanding of and relationship with animals. By the Upper Paleolithic (50,000–12,000 BP), humans were leaving testimonials to their empathic relationships with animals in cave paintings.

One of the most outstanding early examples of animal art is the paintings found in the Lascaux cave in southwestern France, depicting the animals and plants that humans encountered some 17,000 years ago. These paintings were likely created over a range of years by several generations of hunters. Of the more than 6,000 images of humans, animals, and abstract signs, some 900 are animals. Animals that appear in these paintings include horses, deer, aurochs (wild cattle), bison, felines, a bird, a bear, and a rhinoceros. One black bull measures 5.6 meters (approximately 17 feet) in length. The animal is painted as if its legs are in motion. One of the felines appears to be urinating to mark its territory.

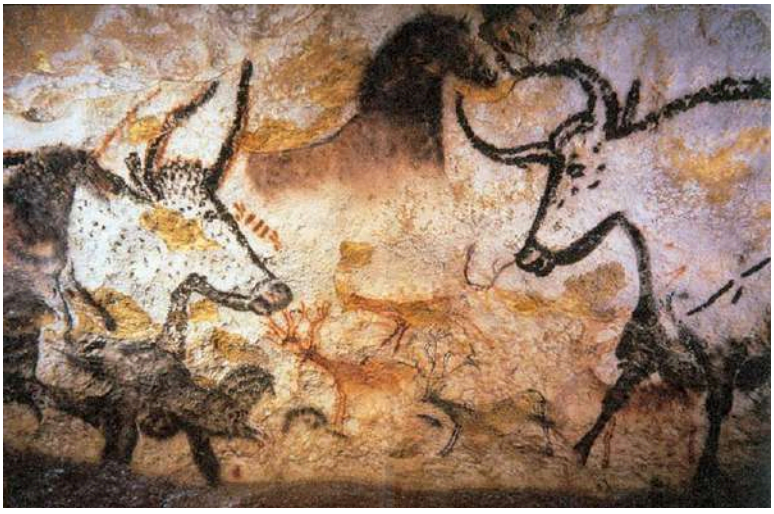

FIGURE 18.7 Paintings of various animal species appear on the walls of the Lascaux cave in southwestern France. The paintings have been dated to ca. 15,000–17,000 BCE. (credit: "6 i Lascaux_painting" by Paul Smith/flickr, CC BY 2.0)

Lascaux (https://openstax.org/r/archeologie.culture) closed to tourists in 1963 to protect the extraordinary artwork inside. Today, it has been named a UNESCO World Heritage Site by the United Nations. This means that it is legally protected by international agreement with the goal of ensuring permanent conservation and protection. Lascaux is of inestimable value for understanding our common human history.

Animal Relationships among Indigenous Hunters

Many cultures continue to rely on wild animals for subsistence today. This dependence requires the mastery of various cognitive skills, including knowledge and understanding of animal behaviors. In all cultures, much of the socialization of children is connected to skills required for subsistence. In societies that rely on hunting for survival, children learn to be especially attentive to their environments. It is also common in such societies for children to keep pets, often the young of wild animals that have been hunted, such as birds and small mammals. Many wild animals are capable of being tamed by human handling when they are young. An animal is considered **tamed** when it has learned to tolerate human proximity and interaction for considerable periods of time.

FIGURE 18.8 Young lowland Amazonian children with a pet sloth in Peru. (credit: "Bad Hair Day in the Amazon" by Kevin Rheese/flickr, CC BY 2.0)

Indigenous hunter-gatherers subsist on what their environment freely provides. They do not produce food but rather collect it. Indigenous hunters typically view animals as fellow sentient and spiritual beings with whom they must maintain a relationship of mutual respect. Commonly, they practice elaborate rituals associated with hunting, both to show respect for their prey and to increase the likelihood of success in the hunt.

In his study of Yukaghir elk and reindeer hunters in Siberia, Danish anthropologist Rane Willerslev (2004) recorded many ritualistic hunting behaviors. These included taking a sauna bath several days before the hunt to diminish the hunters' scent; using special language (code words) to talk about the hunt, never mentioning death or hunting directly, in order to deceive or confuse the animal spirits; and "feeding" a fire with alcohol and tobacco the night before the hunt to perfume the air and *seduce* the animal spirit to desire the hunter. Even so, the hunters are never overconfident about the hunt, as they believe they risk their own identities as human beings when trying to lure an animal and its spirit. The bond between hunter and hunted in Indigenous societies is often viewed as tenuous, a relationship between equals in which the balance of power

could shift in either direction. During the hunt itself, Yukaghir hunters wear wooden skis covered in elk leather so that their movements sound like the movements of an animal in snow, and they practice thinking like the elk or reindeer to lower the animals' inhibitions so that they will allow the hunters to get near. The hunters even imagine themselves speaking to the animal, trying to diminish its fears. For the Yukaghir people, the hunt can be a dangerous interaction, and so respect is necessary at all times, even after the body of the animal has been taken.

A Case Study: Rock Cree Hunters

The Asinskâwôiniwak, or Rock Cree, are an Indigenous society of hunter-gatherers living in northwestern Manitoba, Canada. In his ethnography *Grateful Prey* (1993), cultural anthropologist Robert Brightman examines the various ways in which the Rock Cree think about and interact with animals. Once a foraging society subsisting on big game hunting, fishing, and fur trapping, today the Rock Cree are primarily settled on government lands and no longer nomadic. Their relationship with animals continues to be central to their cultural identity, however, and today they hunt and trap as part of a mixed subsistence system that includes both foraging and wage labor. The Rock Cree's hunting is informed by both Indigenous principles that place high value on big game animals such as bear, moose, and caribou and the current market price for animal products such as pelts.

During his research, Brightman observed a fascinating tension between humans and animals at the core of Rock Cree hunting culture. Because animals are believed to be both spirit and body and capable of regenerating (reincarnating), killing an animal has repercussions for the hunter. If the hunter does not treat the animal's body with respect after the kill, the animal spirit will not return to the hunter:

> The animals are endlessly regenerated, and yet they are finite. I am more powerful than the animal because I kill and eat it. The animal is more powerful than I because it can elude me and cause me to starve. The animal is my benefactor and friend. The animal is my victim and adversary. The animal is different from me, and yet it is like me. (Brightman 1993, 36)

Rock Cree hunters, who may be male or female, are frequently influenced by an animal spirit called a *pawakan* that appears in their dreams. Sometimes referred to as the "master of animals" in other Indigenous societies where it is also found, the *pawakan* is the head spirit of an animal species or type. Individual animals have a different and lesser spirit. The relationship that hunters have with the *pawakan* is complex and variable and depends on the hunter's behaviors and circumstances. The *pawakan* may provide the hunter with useful information about where a prey animal can be found and can persuade a specific animal to either go near the hunter or elude them. A sorcerer can even send a *pawakan* to frighten dangerous animals away from a potential human victim.

The Rock Cree believe that an animal can be successfully hunted only if it *voluntarily* offers itself to the hunter. Through offerings of prayers, songs, and bits of food and tobacco burned in a stove or outside fire, the Rock Cree symbolically interact with their prey prior to the hunt. Once the animal is slain, the hunter makes sure that no parts of its body are wasted. To waste any part of an animal would be disrespectful and would imperil the hunter's future success. The Rock Cree have detailed procedures for butchering, cooking, and eating animals and for disposing of the bones by hanging them in trees where they cannot be violated by other predators. They believe that once the people have finished with the animal and left its bones hanging, the animal will recover its bones and regenerate back into the environment. Sometimes, hunters or trappers say they recognize an animal and that it is the "same one" that was killed before (Brightman 1993, 119).

This study of the Rock Cree illustrates the intense and complex relationships that can exist between humans and wild animals. Many of these same kinds of relationships between hunters and animals also exist among the Netsilik people and other hunting populations. Indigenous hunter-gatherers have a fundamentally different view of their relationships with animals and of their own place in the world than do pastoralists or people living in industrial societies. This traditional wisdom and interconnected way of being in the environment is a valuable part of our shared human cultural heritage.

Animal Relationships among Nomadic and Transhumant Pastoralists

Like hunter-gatherers, pastoralists also have empathic relationships with animals, but the nature of those relationships is different. Pastoralism, which is subsistence based on herding animals, can be either nomadic or transhumant. **Nomadic pastoralism** is herding based on the availability of resources and involves unpredictable movements, as herders decide from day to day where they will go next. **Transhumant pastoralists** have patterned movements from one location to another.

The Izhma Komi and Nenets herders in Russia, discussed earlier in the chapter in the section on multispecies ethnography, practice nomadic pastoralism. While the relationship between nomadic pastoralists and their animals is based on respect and empathy, just as with hunter-gatherers, nomadic pastoralists are more involved in the daily lives of the animals they rely on. Typically, the animals are herded into human campsites each night, and often their movements are monitored during the day. The animals are not physically dependent on humans, but the two groups are involved with each other, as herders offer supplemental food to the reindeer to reinforce their connection to the human campsites for the night. Both hunter-gatherers and nomadic pastoralists rely on their animals for meat and leather, but nomadic pastoralists might also harvest milk and use the animals as transport, two practices that require the animals to be more accustomed to human handling. The pastoral herd is more dependable as a food source than the wild animals of hunter-gatherers, but it is also more labor intensive and time consuming, requiring humans to manage the animals according to a daily routine.

FIGURE 18.9 A Sami reindeer herder in Sweden. Pastoralists such as the Sami rely on their animals for meat and leather, as well as sometimes making use of their milk and using them to transport heavy materials. (credit: "A Day at Work" by Mats Andersson/Wikimedia Commons, CC BY 2.0)

Nomadic pastoralism is not as widely practiced as transhumant pastoralism, which evolved around the time of the rise of agriculture in Europe, Asia, and Africa. Transhumant pastoralists do not typically raise crops or forage for wild plants, and they are dependent on trade with agricultural societies for vegetable products. Interestingly, while there are cultures that practice strict vegetarianism and do not consume any meat products, such as the Hindu and Jain cultures in India, humans cannot live solely on meat. Arctic hunters who had no access to vegetation in the winter ate the stomach contents of grazing animals, such as caribou, to access vegetable matter. Transhumant pastoralists typically have a tenuous and competitive relationship with agriculturalist societies, as agriculturalists may not always have sufficient surplus for trade in years when there have been droughts or warfare, for example. At times, the relationships between sedentary agriculturalists and more mobile and dependent pastoralists break down into conflict involving threats, destruction of property, and even warfare.

Transhumant pastoralism is usually built around a seasonal migration between a family's two households in different geographical areas. It normally takes days or weeks to move people and herds between the households, so pastoralists often have mobile residences, such as yurts or tents, to use during travel. As we

find in nomadic pastoral societies, transhumant pastoralists rely on their animals for various trade commodities such as meat, leather, wool and wool goods (e.g., ropes and blankets), and juvenile offspring. The most common domestic herd animals of transhumant pastoralists are cattle, sheep, goats, camelids (llamas and alpacas), and yaks.

18.3 Symbolism and Meaning of Animals

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Identify totemism.
- Identify the roles of animals in the oral traditions of many human cultures.
- Describe the various ways animals are used in religious practices.

When we think of animals, we usually picture them as pets, food, or wildlife, but animals play a central role in the symbolism of human lives as well. Humans relate to animals not only as tangible beings but also as images and symbols that carry personal meaning and communicate cultural norms. While we can find animal symbols almost everywhere in human cultures, they play a particularly significant role in group identity.

Totemism

Totemism is a belief system in which a subcultural group acknowledges kinship with a spirit being, typically a plant or animal, that serves as the group's emblem or herald. Relationships with their totems mirror the social relationships they have with each other as subgroups within their society. Totemic groups, often referred to as clans, view themselves as descendants of nonhuman ancestors and maintain special relationships of respect with other species in the natural world. Totemism is an example of a *metaphorical relationship* between humans and the natural world, one that links humans, animals, plants, landforms, and even weather events into a unified web of life. Many Indigenous groups practice totemism and have ancestral alliances with certain animals and plants, demonstrated by the ways in which they talk about them in their myths and depict them in their artwork. Totemic cultures frequently practice shamanism as a way to communicate with animal and plant species.

FIGURE 18.10 The totem pole, a cultural practice of some North American Indigenous groups, exhibits the clan's

identity, with a focus on the connections that the clan has with ancestors, animals, and plants. This reproduction of a First Nations totem pole is on display in Stanley Park, Vancouver, Canada. (credit: "2014 06 27 Cher and Downtown Vancouver 065" by Blake Handley/flickr, CC BY 2.0)

The **totem**, an animal or plant believed to be spiritually connected to a group of people, is a symbol of identity for the subgroup. The Anishinaabe, a North American Indigenous tribe located along the midwestern border between Canada and the United States, was historically divided into various *doodeman* (clans), most of which had local animals as their totems. Examples of their totem animals include a loon, a crane, a fish, a bird, a bear, a marten, and a deer. All members of the same totemic clan identified with one another as descendants and relatives. The totemic identification that children received at birth (from their fathers' affiliations) connected individuals not otherwise linked by close social or biological relationships, creating a spiritual kinship within the clan through the common totem. Clans were often associated with specific occupations and work assignments within the larger tribe. Clans also determined marriage rules; members of the same clan could not marry one another, as it was considered to be incest. While the Anishinaabe today have fewer clans, and thus fewer animal totems, than when their population was higher, and the importance of clans and totems has lessened, they continue to value the identities that their ancestors constructed through the natural world.

The *totem pole* is a form of monumental architecture displaying the significant totems and historical events in a clan or family's ancestral history. It functions as a signpost that identifies the occupants of an area to those passing through and proclaims the pride that a people have in their ancestry. Extended families are grouped together in a clan. The totem pole serves to proclaim the clan membership that an extended family has had throughout its history. The story of the first creation of the Indigenous group and the major events that occurred in the life of that family, its clan, and its tribe are all depicted on the totem pole. Many, though not all, Indigenous groups in North America make totem poles. These poles are historical landmarks of cultural identity.

Although Western societies do not construct physical totem poles, they do utilize some of the same symbolism in sports mascots and family heraldry. Sports teams use different types of symbolism, but animal symbols are common. Often, teams choose animals that are local to their immediate environment or that connect with certain characteristics and behaviors with which the group wishes to identify. Some well-known teams with animal mascots are the Detroit Lions, the Tampa Bay Rays, and the Boston Bruins. What animal mascots do you know?

Animals in Oral Tradition

Animals play an important role in nearly all oral traditions and religions. Across cultures, including Western cultures in Europe and the United States, animals appear as protagonists in myths and stories. The animal characters in nursery rhymes, fairy tales, fables, and folktales teach adults and children lessons and morals and model personal characteristics, some peculiar to a specific culture and others more universal. For example, the story of Chicken Little, also known in the UK as Henny Penny, is one that many US children learn at an early age. It was collected in print in the early 19th century, but it has older roots as a European folktale. In this tale, Chicken Little goes out for a walk on a windy day, and an acorn falls on her head. She panics—the sky must be falling! She runs around the farm warning all the animals about the calamity that she believes is happening: "The sky is falling! The sky is falling!" The moral of the story is to have courage and not believe everything you hear.

"The Queen Bee" is an interesting European reflection on animals, recorded from oral tradition by the Grimm brothers in 1812 . In this story, three princes, all brothers, leave their castle home to seek their fortunes and travel around the world. Two of the brothers move about haphazardly, paying no attention to the animals around them, but the youngest son, with the insulting name of Simpleton, is more considerate to the animals they encounter. When the older brothers try to destroy an anthill, kill ducks, and chase bees out of their hive, Simpleton intervenes to protect the animals and stop his brothers from causing harm. Eventually, the three princes arrive at another castle, in which everything living has been turned to stone except for one very old man. The old man tells the princes that if they can perform three tasks, all of which depend on the help of animals, they will be able to wake up the castle and earn the hand of a princess. The animals, remembering how they were treated, agree to help only young Simpleton, who thereby gains the keys of the kingdom. The

moral is that even the smallest animals serve a mighty purpose.

Many of the animal stories that are still told in Western societies were either collected by the Grimm brothers in the early 1800s (1812–1857) or taken from Aesop's Fables, a collection of stories supposedly told by Aesop, an enslaved Greek storyteller, around 500 BCE. These stories have made their way into children's storybooks and animated movies—including an animated version of Chicken Little.

Indigenous societies across cultures have their own sets of animal stories that provide instruction and wisdom. Some of the most common animal symbols among Native American cultures are the coyote, the raven, the bear, and the spider. Coyote and Raven often appear in stories as **tricksters**, animal spirits or deities who are lively and clever and get into trouble through thoughtless or unconventional actions. In the story of Coyote and Bluebird from the Pima people of the southeastern United States, Coyote envies Bluebird's plumage and asks for the secret to the beautiful blue color of the bird's feathers. Bluebird tells Coyote that these pretty blue feathers came from bathing in blue water. Coyote does the same and comes out with a fine blue coat. In his vanity, he tries to outrun his shadow so that he can see his beautiful blue body in the light, and he crashes into a stump head-on, landing in the dirt, which coats his blue fur and paints him a "dirty" color that he still has today. The moral of this tale is that vanity does not serve an individual well.

In West Africa, many myths focus on a supernatural figure named Anansi, the spider. Anansi is a **culture hero** who teaches lessons of bravery and morality. Culture heroes are typically associated with supernatural feats and are particular to each cultural group, exhibiting specific traits, actions, and discoveries that are significant in that culture. In one Anansi story cycle brought by enslaved Africans to the Caribbean area during the time of the Atlantic slave trade, Anansi goes fishing and fills his basket with many different sizes of fish. On his way home, he crosses paths with Tiger, who demands to know what Anansi is carrying in the basket. Scared, Anansi lies and says he has nothing. Tiger takes the basket and sees the fish. In a series of back-and-forth interactions, Anansi succeeds in outsmarting Tiger by agreeing to clean his fur. Tiger shakes down his long hair, and then Anansi uses it to tie Tiger to the trunk of a tree, picks up his basket of fish, and continues home. The moral of the story? *Use your wit to protect yourself and your possessions*. Or, perhaps, *Don't let a bully get the best of you*.

Animals in Religion

Animals play a role in most religions. Common functions include as objects of ritual sacrifice and as tokens symbolizing gifts, payments, or even messages between the human world and the divine. As just one example, think of the use of a dove in the Noah and the ark myth (Genesis 8:6–12). The dove is the first animal to bring back a piece of greenery, evidence that the flood had receded. With this promise, Noah begins preparations to leave the ark and start over. This use of animals as messengers and forms of sacred communication is seen across cultures.

In prehistoric Peru, wild guinea pigs were sacrificed and buried either alone or with humans. They appear in archaeological deposits in Peru as early as 9000 BP (Sandweiss and Wing 1997), and they continue to appear as sacrifices after their domestication around 4500 BP and through the Inca period that ended in the 16th century. Some of the sacrificed animals are whole and intact, mummified and desiccated, while others have been burned and their charred bones stored as ritual offerings inside elaborate ceramic jars. Guinea pigs were and still are a dependable source of meat in the Andes, where they traditionally live inside kitchens, nesting around the warmth of the cooking area. They are also used medicinally, their fat rubbed on areas of sickness to draw out pain and infection, and employed as divination tools. During divination rituals today, some Andean healers will rub a living guinea pig on a patient's body to draw out some of the illness and then cut the animal open to "read" it, looking for a sign of some type of abnormality in the guinea pig's organs that would mirror the location of the illness in the human patient. At Lo Demás, an ancient Inca fishing site south of Lima, Peru (ca. 1480–1540 CE), archaeologists have excavated multiple guinea pig sacrifices, some of which show characteristic signs of having been used for divination and healing prior to burial.

In India, where Hinduism is the predominant religion, it is common to see cows walking along city streets, undisturbed and roaming freely. Many Hindus practice vegetarianism, but even those who eat meat do not usually eat beef. Cattle are sacred in Hinduism. In the Vedas, the Hindu sacred texts, the cow is associated with Aditi, the mother of all gods. In a very famous study, "The Cultural Ecology of India's Sacred Cattle" (1966),

cultural anthropologist Marvin Harris explores the economic rationale associated with revering cattle, arguing that cattle are considered sacred because they are more useful when allowed to live out their natural lifespans than when slaughtered at a young age for meat alone. In India, cattle provide dung that can be dried and used as fuel, traction for plowing fields, some limited milk production, and reproductive capacity. When cattle die of old age, beef and leather are then harvested by those in the lowest socioeconomic class. Keeping cattle alive as long as possible thus provides for a greater range of material assets than raising them for food. This economic rationale, however true it may be, does not negate the cultural and religious importance of cattle to Indian people. Understanding animals' symbolic roles is critical to understanding human belief systems.

FIGURE 18.11 A white elephant enjoys the rain in an elephant sanctuary in Phuket, Thailand. In Buddhism, the elephant symbolizes mental strength and endurance (Diamond 2011). Buddhists in Burma, Cambodia, and Thailand believe that the white elephant represents one of the reincarnations of the Buddha. (credit: "Elephant in the Rain" by Marc Dalmulder/flickr, CC BY 2.0)

Buddhism is a religion that reveres all life and sees humans and animals as intertwined, each capable of being **reincarnated** into the other, reborn into a new cycle of life inhabiting a new body of the same or another species. Because Buddhists believe in **karma**, a spiritual principle of cause and effect in which an individual's words, actions, and deeds in one life affect their conditions in the next life cycle, the relationship between humans and other animals should ideally be based on respect and sympathy. All forms of life are working toward enlightenment, a state of awakening and having a complete knowledge of the life process.

Animals are important in human belief systems. English art critic and poet John Berger ([1980] 1991) writes about the gaze between humans and other animals, saying that animals remind humans that we are not here on Earth alone, that we are all companion species. Many religious systems reflect the awareness that life is not the exclusive domain of the human species and that our world is a shared community. For more on animals and belief systems, see the Ethnographic Sketch at the end of the chapter.

18.4 Pet-Keeping

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Define the pet as a cultural artifact.
- Trace the historical development of pets in Western societies.
- Provide examples of pets in Indigenous societies.
- Identify major behavioral and morphological characteristics of pets.
- Describe the economic impact of pet keeping in Western societies.

One of the most familiar and intimate roles that animals play in the lives of contemporary Western people is that of pets. **Pets** are animals that are either domesticated or tamed with whom humans have developed a long-term social bond. Pets are part of many human cultures.

Pets as Cultural Artifacts

Although specific pets are actual beings (many of us can think of the face of one or more pets we live or have lived with), pets in general can be understood as a cultural artifact. This means that the ways in which pets are treated and what is expected of them vary a great deal from one culture to another. Most pets live in or around human households, are considered the possessions of their human owners, and have limited ability to make freewill decisions. Chinese geographer and early scholar in human-animal studies Yi-Fu Tuan (1984) has studied the ways in which humans have dominated the living environment and their pets, with approaches varying between extremes of dominance and affection, love and abuse, cruelty and kindness. He argues that pets in Western societies are defined by emotion and nostalgia, an approach likely related to increasing distance between people and the natural world. Even within a culture that treats certain animals in a sentimental way, relationships with other animals can still be characterized by cruelty and dominance. Tuan writes, "Animals are slaughtered for food and clothing without a twinge of conscience. A few specimens and species, however, catch the fancy of people in a playful mood and are made into pampered pets or fervently supported causes" (1984, 162).

What we would recognize as *modern* pet keeping in the Western world—an approach characterized by keeping animals for no other purpose than to be companions for humans—emerged during the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Prior to that time, animals cared for by humans had functions or tasks within the household. As communities and towns became increasingly urban and people lost interaction with wild animals, the relationship between people and animals shifted in various ways. Many families were smaller and had more time to care for a pet. Animals had fewer assigned duties and responsibilities and were more available as companions. Improvements in medical and veterinary sciences lowered the risk of **zoonoses**, or diseases transmitted between animals and humans, although zoonotic infections continue to threaten human populations (consider COVID-19, for example). Lastly, a growing middle class with more affluence could afford the luxury of keeping pets. Modern pet keeping is marked by a relationship of demonstrative affection between people and their animals as well as by the economic development of pet industries, such as pet food companies, veterinary services, and even cremation and burial services.

Pet Keeping in Indigenous Societies

There is extensive evidence of pet keeping in Indigenous societies. In many hunter-gatherer societies, children keep numerous pets, most often birds, small rodents, and monkeys. These animals, often taken directly from the forest or wilderness area when they are still young, are considered valuable companions for children. Caring for the animals is thought to teach children to understand animals' movements and personalities and help them develop a sense of stewardship for the natural world.

Animal ethicist James Serpell (1988) has found wide-ranging pet keeping throughout Indigenous societies in North and South America. The Waraõ in the Orinoco region of Venezuela keep birds, monkeys, sloths, rodents, ducks, dogs, and chickens as pets. The Kalapalo of central Brazil have a particular affection for birds and treat them as members of the family. The Barasana of eastern Colombia keep pet rodents, birds (especially parrots and macaws), peccaries (piglike mammals), and even young jaguars. And North American Indigenous groups are known to have tamed raccoons, moose, bison, wolves, bears, and especially dogs.

FIGURE 18.12 A Guaraní family with their dog in Mato Grosso do Sul, Brazil, in 2004. Pets are part of many human cultures. (credit: "Agrotoxico Ti Guarani Kaiova_Foto_Ana Mendes (23)" by Ana Mendes/Amazônia Real/flickr, CC BY 2.0)

While many Native Americans are very affectionate with their dogs, their style of "keeping" these dogs as pets differs a great deal from what most American are familiar with. In a 2020 article titled "What Rez Dogs Mean to the Lakota," Lakota tribal members Richard Meyers and Ernest Weston Jr. explain:

> In our culture, people traditionally don't own animals the way other cultures have pets; the animals are left wild, and may choose to go to a home to offer protection, companionship, or even to become a part of a community. People feed the dogs and care for them, but the dogs remain living outside and are free to be their own beings. This relationship differs from one where the human is the master or owner of an animal who is considered property. Instead, the dog and people provide service to one another in a mutual relationship of reciprocity and respect.

The roles of pets in human societies are very complex and depend on specific cultural traditions and ways of relating to animals, both wild and domesticated. It is important to note that pets play different roles across different cultures and cannot be easily defined.

The Making of Pets

In Western societies, domesticated animals have increasingly been subjected to extreme genetic manipulation in order to manufacture ever more novel and attractive pet animals. In Europe, the earliest kennel clubs, designed to develop and maintain breeds and record pedigrees, began as dog show societies in England in 1859 and were later established as governing bodies and official institutions, starting in 1873. Although dog breeds now come from all over the world and continue to be developed—a recent addition to the list of breeds recognized by the American Kennel Club (AKC) is the Biewer terrier, first recognized in January 2021—the majority of modern pet breeds were first developed in Victorian England, where pet keeping flourished and was adopted by all social classes.

Sometimes, this selective breeding of pets is detrimental to the health of the animal breed. In the English bulldog, for example, 86 percent of litters must be delivered by cesarian section because the pups' large heads and mothers' narrow pelvises have made live, natural births very challenging (Evans and Adams 2010). In addition, as dog breeders create more and more specialized pets, the gene pool becomes narrowed and less diverse, producing animals that are more prone to conditions such as cancer, hip dysplasia, deafness, hereditary epilepsy, and allergies. In pedigreed cats, which are subject to the same selective pressures in breeding, there are both heart and kidney problems that are thought to be accelerated by selective breeding.

One of the most commonly sought set of characteristics by people selectively breeding animals for pets is the appearance of a permanent juvenile state. **Neotony**, the tendency for an animal to maintain both physical and behavioral juvenile characteristics into adulthood, has been highly sought after in many domesticated

animals. Some of the most commonly desired juvenile physical traits are larger and wider-set eyes, a smaller snout (or nose), a more globular (or rounded) skull, and fewer and smaller teeth (which leaves many dogs with crowded teeth and dental problems). Social neotony involves a cluster of traits relating to a strong and submissive attachment to humans and increased attentiveness to human behavior.

The overall size of animals is also a consideration when breeding pets. Consider the range of miniature animals we have selected for today: miniature horses, mules, and pigs; pygmy goats and hedgehogs; and others. Of all animals kept as pets, dogs have been the most manipulated in size. Today, there is a proliferation of "teacup" breeds that can be carried in the owner's pocket or purse. Small dogs offer many advantages to humans living in urban environments and small apartments, but there are few advantages for the dogs themselves. Most teacup versions are created by breeding the smallest animals in a litter. There are many health risks that accompany this process of extreme miniaturization, such as collapsing tracheas, digestive problems, heart defects, liver shunts, slipping kneecaps, and a host of dental challenges.

Pet keeping has deep roots in human societies and has changed over time. Interestingly, it has also been documented among some animals. Nonhuman animals have been known to form cross-species friendships and alliances and to take care of each other both in the wild and in captivity. One interesting example is the gorilla Hanabiko, called "Koko," who was trained to understand spoken English and communicate using a form of American Sign Language that her keeper called Gorilla Sign Language. Koko became interested in cats and signed that she wanted a kitten for Christmas in 1983. Her keepers at first provided her with a stuffed cat, but Koko insisted that she wanted a living one. On her birthday the following July, her keepers allowed her to choose a rescue kitten, which she named "All Ball" because he had no tail and was very fluffy. The relationship between Koko and her kitten, documented in many articles and videos, was a nurturing one in which Koko treated All Ball like her baby and her pet. Pet keeping says a great deal about the human need to reach across species for companionship, dominance, and affection. Perhaps, though, this is not solely a human need.

18.5 Animal Industries and the Animal Trade

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Describe the evolution of zoos.
- Recognize the benefits of ecotourism.
- Define the use value of animals in biomedical research today.

In the past two centuries, Western societies have increasingly taken the approach of treating animals as a *commodity*—a raw material or resource for human use, a thing instead of a being. When we consider the relationships that many Indigenous societies have with animals, we can better realize how different the Western idea of animals is. Approaching the world and nature primarily as consumers rather than coequals, Western cultures face increasing environmental, socio-emotional, and resource-related challenges in all areas of life.

Zoos

Zoos have long been part of human societies. The earliest evidence of a zoo has been found in Hierakonpolis, the capital of Upper Egypt during the Predynastic period, today called Nekhen. Here, archaeologists have unearthed the mummified remains of a collection of wild and domesticated animals from about 5,000 years ago that included baboons, hippos, gazelles, crocodiles, a leopard, and cats and dogs. Some of the animals had injuries likely caused by being tied or enclosed in some way. Many of them were buried in the same way that humans were buried, and some were found inside human burials (Boissoneault 2015). Another famous historical zoo was that of the Aztec king Montezuma. When the Spaniards arrived in the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlán in 1519, they were surprised by the vast collection of animals housed in enclosures and rooms within the king's palace complex, including jaguars, bears, eagles, deer, fowl, ocelots, and little dogs. According to the Spanish chroniclers, the zoo had some 300 keepers to care for the animals. Similar to early pet keeping, zoos were typically associated with wealth and status.

Modern zoos emerged in the late 18th century during the period known as the Enlightenment, characterized

by the development of science and the expansion of colonial empires. European zoos were filled with wildlife from new colonies and "foreign" lands and were considered places to see strange and exotic animals. The first modern zoos opened in Paris in 1793, London in 1828, and Philadelphia in 1874. These were all very popular public institutions that exhibited animals for entertainment and observation. The zoos were laid out like public parks, with small animal enclosures that allowed people to get up close to see.

There have been many changes in zoos over the last 50 years. With the signing of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES) in 1973 and the passage of the Endangered Species Act in the United States the same year, wild animal imports to US zoos declined sharply. This coincided with the development of breeding and conservation programs at zoos, some of which involve breeding rare and endangered species to be released back into the wild as part of a sustainable population. One species for which breeding efforts are currently underway is the giant panda. Animals are commonly moved from one zoo site to another and shared for breeding purposes in an effort to fortify the breed. Animals that are endangered may be part of a zoo preservation program. In some cases, critically endangered animals are cared for by zoos when they are young and vulnerable to predators and then reintroduced into the wild. The website of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) features a long list of animals whose populations have been preserved through the efforts of zoos, including the black-footed ferret, the California condor, the Ohio River basin freshwater mussel, the golden lion tamarin, and the Oregon spotted frog. Zoos also sponsor research programs with goals such as creating sustainable populations in the wild, conserving wildlife habitats, improving animal health, or even collecting endangered species' genetic material (DNA) (DeMello 2012, 106).

What should be the role of zoos in contemporary Western societies? Should the zoo be closer to a theme park or a museum? Should the goal of a zoo be animal conservation or human recreation? These questions guide us as we continue to rethink the mission of zoos today.

PROFILES IN ANTHROPOLOGY

Barbara J. King
1956–

FIGURE 18.13 Anthropologist Barbara King with Cynthia Goat at the Farm Sanctuary in Watkins Glen, New York (credit: Charles Hogg)

Personal History: Born in New Jersey, King earned her BA from Douglass College (Rutgers University) and her MA and PhD from the University of Oklahoma, where she specialized in biological anthropology. Her doctoral field research in Amboseli National Park, Kenya, focused on foraging and social behaviors among yellow baboons. From 1988 to 2015, she served as professor of anthropology at the College of William & Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia, where she received numerous awards for outstanding teaching and mentorship. She is now a professor emerita, although she continues to have an active role in academia, research, publishing, and mentorship.

Area of Anthropology: King's research and contributions to the field are notable for their broad-ranging relevance across anthropological subfields and disciplines, among them linguistic and communication systems in primates, social relationships between species, the primate origins of religious thought, and the social and emotional lives of various animal species, including those being factory farmed. Her anthropological focus is often on the continuities between humans and other animals and the ethics of human-animal relationships. She has published seven books and numerous scholarly articles.

Accomplishments in the Field: Given the four-field scope of much of King's research, she has had considerable impact on many areas of academia. In 2002, King was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship for "exceptional capacity for productive scholarship" and creativity. Two of her works, *Evolving God: A Provocative View on the Origins of Religion* (2007, Doubleday) and *How Animals Grieve* (2013, University of Chicago Press), have received prizes and awards as outstanding contributions to the field.

King is also an active public anthropologist, bridging gaps between academic research and the public. A contributor to the National Public Radio blog *Cosmos and Culture* from 2011 to 2018 and a full-time science

writer since her retirement in 2015, King, through interviews, articles, and blogs, communicates the importance of science for public good and social change. Her research on animal grief, *How Animals Grieve*, was highlighted in her 2019 TED Talk, "Grief and Love in the Animal Kingdom (https://openstax.org/r/barbara_j_king)." King also regularly reviews books for various media outlets, including NPR, the *Washington Post*, and the *Times Literary Supplement*, and publishes in *Sapiens*, an online anthropology magazine devoted to public outreach. She is a self-described Twitter addict (@bjkingape).

Importance of Their Work

In her public role, King seeks to educate and incentivize people to make positive change for human and animal lives. In her newest book, *Animals' Best Friends: Putting Compassion to Work for Animals in Captivity and in the Wild* (University of Chicago Press, 2021), King issues a call to cultivate compassionate action toward all the animals sharing their lives with us. She challenges us to widen our lens on the world around us and become animals' best friends, whether they are in our homes, in the wild, in a lab, in a zoo, or destined to be thought of as food. "When we still ourselves and genuinely see the more-than-human-world, possibilities for helping animals bloom all around us—we may rescue rather than squish a spider in our home; resist an urge to crowd wild animals in order to snap selfies; advocate for non-animal models in laboratory science; refuse to support roadside zoos or swim-with-dolphin programs; and increase our plant-based eating" (Snipes, personal communication, 2021). For more on King's recent work, see her interview with nature writer Brandon Keim (https://openstax.org/r/youtube_kno1wWevRVg) on Earth Day 2021.

Ecotourism

Another way in which contemporary Western societies are attempting to address the damage caused by a commodified view of the natural world, including the animals living in it, is through **ecotourism**. This is tourism designed to be sustainable and to help preserve the flora and fauna of endangered natural environments. Often, the focus is on visiting threatened environments and observing wildlife in its natural habitat. Such tourism can earn money to aid in the conservation of these areas, provide employment for local residents, and raise awareness of the importance of biological, as well as cultural, diversity. Ideally, care is taken to ensure that tourists visiting natural areas do not disturb or damage the environment; however, there are no global standards for ecotourism, and some sites are more successful at protecting sensitive environments than others. The term *greenwashing* is sometimes applied to sites that promote the natural environment as an attraction while engaging in exploitative and environmentally destructive behavior.

FIGURE 18.14 The Galapagos giant tortoise is found only in the Galapagos Islands. It is being preserved today through ecotourism and conservation efforts. (credit: "Pinta Island Giant Galapagos Tortoise" by Arturo de Frias Marques/flickr, Public Domain)

An example of effective and increasingly responsible ecotourism is provided by the Galápagos Islands. The

Galápagos island chain was made famous by English naturalist Charles Darwin, who used his observations of the diversity of the ecosystem's animals to develop the theory of natural selection. Located 563 miles west of the coast of Ecuador, the Galápagos were listed by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site in 1978. Prior to that, the islands were only partially protected. Some of the Galápagos Islands were designated as wildlife sanctuaries in 1934, and the island archipelago became an Ecuadorian national park in 1959. Around that time, a few wealthy tourists began to travel to the islands to view their extraordinary biodiversity. By the 1990s, tourism had become very popular and a tourist industry had developed, with hotels, restaurants, and transportation. Today, the Galápagos National Park Service, which manages 97 percent of the island lands (the other 3 percent are contained settlements where local people live), has strict policies limiting the daily number of visitors. Local people serve as employees in the park and teach the value of conservation to tourists. It is the hope of the Galápagos National Park Service and the local people that this island ecosystem and its living inhabitants—such as the Galápagos giant tortoise, the Galápagos penguin, the blue-footed booby, the flightless cormorant, and the waved albatross—will be preserved for future generations.

Animals and the Medical Industry

In 2015, there were estimated to be some 192 million animals being used in biomedical laboratories across 179 countries worldwide (Taylor and Alvarez 2019). These animals are used for medical experiments, drug testing, product testing, and psychological research. The most commonly used animals in US labs are mice, rats, and birds, though a range of other animals—including rabbits, guinea pigs, hamsters, farm animals such as pigs and sheep, cats, dogs, and nonhuman primates—are used as well (Humane Society of the United States 2021). These animals come from various sources, including breeding programs within the biomedical labs themselves.

Although biologists, chemists, animal behaviorists, psychiatrists, and psychologists tend to be more frequently involved in medical research with animals, anthropologists—especially primatologists and linguistic anthropologists—also have a history of working with animals in laboratory settings. Primatologist Sue Savage-Rumbaugh carried out long-term cognitive studies of two bonobos, Kanzi and Panbanisha, from birth. Savage-Rumbaugh was interested in understanding how bonobos, which are closely related to humans, learn communication. She developed a computer-based language program using lexigrams, or symbols representing words, printed on a keyboard. Although lacking the vocal apparatus of a human, Kanzi and Panbanisha demonstrated advanced cognitive linguistic skills by responding to human speech and generating language by pressing lexigrams. In one study comparing Kanzi's language competence with that of a two-year-old human child, Kanzi scored significantly higher: 74 percent accuracy, compared to 65 percent accuracy for the two-year-old human (Savage-Rumbaugh et al. 1993). Studies such as this one shed light not only on animals' abilities but also on the continuities that exist between humans and animals.

There are two primary regulations in the United States that pertain to biomedical research animals: the Animal Welfare Act (AWA) and the Public Health Service Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals (PHS Policy). The AWA is a law passed by Congress in 1966 that originally covered the transport, sale, and handling of some animals and advocated for more humane animal practices in laboratories. The act has been amended several times (1970, 1976, 1985, 1990, 1991, 2002, 2007, 2008, 2014), including to add a requirement that researchers register their use of animals and also consider a database of alternatives if the procedure can cause any distress or pain. The act cover animals such as dogs, cats, rabbits, and nonhuman primates, but it does not cover those animals most commonly used in laboratory experiments: rats, mice, and birds. The PHS Policy applies to all research facilities that perform animal research and receive any type of federal funding; though not itself a law, its creation was mandated by the Health Research Extension Act, passed by Congress in 1985. This policy states that each institution conducting such research must have an institutional animal care and use committee (IACUC) that reviews all proposed animal research experiments. This committee must include at least five members, one of whom must be a veterinarian and another a person not affiliated with the institution. When reviewing research proposals, the IACUC is expected to evaluate whether (1) basic standards are met, (2) the use of animals is justified, (3) the research is not duplicated, and (4) pain and discomfort for the animals are minimized. The United Kingdom and the European Union have similar measures to regulate and oversee animal laboratory research.

Animal research has been critical to many advances in medicine, including the development of the first

human vaccine to successfully eradicate smallpox, the polio vaccine, and treatments for HIV/AIDS, Alzheimer's disease, hepatitis, and malaria. Animals have played a crucial role in the development of many new drugs and therapies, and a significant amount of research conducted on animals also benefits veterinary medicine and other animals as well. However, the use of living animals for experiments and testing raises many ethical issues and has inspired a great deal of conflict and controversy.

Animals in Our Lives

Humans share their lives with animals in many ways, and how we think about ourselves as human beings rests primarily on the distinctions we see between ourselves and other species. English art critic and poet John Berger writes, "With their parallel lives, animals offer man a companionship which is different from any offered by human exchange. Different because it is a companionship offered to the loneliness of man as a species" ([1980] 1991, 6). Across cultures and across time, humans have looked toward animals as fellow participants in their lives. They actively participate in the ways we define ourselves. They feed us and accompany us. They work for us and protect us. They also serve as symbols and messengers that help us better understand our world. Our lives are intertwined in multiple ways.

What is an animal? What is the value of nonhuman animals in our lives? How do our attitudes about animals define who we are as human beings? Anthropologists and other researchers increasingly see the value of bringing animals into their research because animals are critical to understanding what it means to be human.

ETHNOGRAPHIC SKETCHES

Animal Familiarity

Experience of Marjorie Snipes, chapter author

FIGURE 18.15 A young female goat and her kid. (credit: "Nursing Kid" by swallowsan/flickr, CC BY 2.0)

During fieldwork in northwestern Argentina, I lived with a community of herders who tended goats and sheep, interviewing every day and taking copious notes. After six months of research, I took a two-week break from the field to return to the United States to welcome my new niece. When I returned to the field site, I had an accidental breakthrough.

However, let me back up. In this Andean community, herders believe that their flocks are gifts from Pachamama (Mother Earth), and women are the primary caretakers and shepherds for the animals. After I had lived in the community for about six weeks, one of the families gave me a small kid, or young goat, which I named Maisie. I suspected that this gift was a test to see if I was planning to be part of the community. I took care of Maisie every day, even though she remained a functioning member of another family's herd.

Goats normally reproduce toward the end of their first year, and Maisie was pregnant when I left for my two-week absence from the field. While I was gone, she gave birth to a male that the family named Vicente Beda, after a Catholic saint. When I arrived back at the household where I was staying, late in the day, Doña Florentina was eager for me to meet the newest member of my herd. We entered the corral, and the young kid came running up to me with no fear. When I commented about the familiarity, as young animals tend to be skittish around new people, Florentina responded, "But he knows you, Margo." And so I learned about the *librito* (little book) that they believe is located in the stomach area of each of their herd animals.

The *librito* contains information about an animal's life: who loves it, where it belongs, and when it will die. It is the shepherd's duty to discern the contents of the book through the animal's behavior, as she cannot openly read it. Animals who get lost frequently or have trouble bonding with the herd will be traded, as families believe such animals do not belong to them. And when it is time to select an animal for slaughter, the shepherd chooses an animal whose behavior indicates that the time is appropriate. While the signs vary according to the animal's disposition, it is normally a change of demeanor that the shepherd interprets as acquiescence. During slaughter, a woman typically holds the animal while a man cuts the throat. In all slaughters that I attended, the goat or sheep was killed peacefully, and butchering occurred quickly afterward—except one. The animal was a large ewe, and she was initially compliant with being handled, but at the moment that her throat was cut, her back feet scrambled and she tried to rise up. Everyone around me became very still and began to lower their voices, saying that it was not the right time for the ewe, that there had been a mistake. The shepherd had "made a mistake."

The ewe was not butchered. She lay there for about an hour while the family discussed where to take her for burial. She was buried far away from the corral and household.

MINI-FIELDWORK ACTIVITY

Multispecies Animal Observation

Ethnography increasingly utilizes methods aimed at incorporating a multitude of diverse voices. The purpose of this is not diversity for diversity's sake but to more accurately reflect and understand the various interactions that may occur within any field encounter. In this fieldwork activity, you will experiment with multispecies ethnography. Choose a wild animal (e.g., pigeon, duck, squirrel, insect, etc.), and observe it (with no interaction) for at least 15 minutes. During the observation, make consistent notes every 30 seconds to one minute, writing down the animal's behavior incrementally and how it interacts with its environment. Note also whether the animal seems to notice your presence or interact with you. Following the observation session, write up a multispecies ethnographic account, using the data you have collected to inform you of the possible intentions and thoughts of the animal as well as your own thoughts and reactions. Your write-up should be 500 to 750 words and should end with a paragraph reflecting on the experience of trying to write from an animal's perspective (based on human observation). Turn in the original timed notes along with the final paper.

Suggested Films

Cave of Forgotten Dreams. 2010. Directed by Werner Herzog. Creative Differences.

Eduardo the Healer. 1978. Directed by Richard Cowan. Serious Business Company.

People of the Seal. 2009. Directed by Kate Raisz. NOAA Ocean Media Center.

Key Terms

animal a multicellular organism, either vertebrate or invertebrate, that can breathe, move, ingest, excrete, and sexually reproduce.

animal empathy a human sense of understanding and sensing the feelings of other animals.

anthropocentrism the belief that the human perspective is the most important one; also called human exceptionalism.

conspecifics members of the same species.

culture hero an idealized animal or human figure associated with supernatural feats. A culture hero is particular to their cultural group, exhibiting specific traits, actions, and discoveries that are significant to that group of people

domestication the selective breeding of a species by humans to create animals better suited to human life.

ecotourism an international conservation movement to preserve the flora and fauna of endangered natural environments through conscientious tourism.

karma a Buddhist spiritual principle of cause and effect in which an individual's words, actions, and deeds in one life affect their conditions in the next life cycle

multispecies ethnography the study of the interactions between humans and other species within their shared environment.

nature a domain defined by cultures as outside or on the margins of human culture.

neotony a tendency for an animal to maintain both physical and social juvenile characteristics into adulthood.

nomadic pastoralism herding that is based on the availability of environmental resources; involves unpredictable movements, as herders decide from day to day where they will go next.

pastoral societies societies in which primary subsistence is based on herding groups of animals.

pets animals, whether domesticated or tamed, with whom humans have a social bond.

polyspecific interaction involving multiple species.

reincarnation rebirth into a new cycle of life, inhabiting a new body of the same or another species.

symbiosis a mutually beneficial relationship between species.

tame a behavioral condition in which humans encourage wild animals to tolerate human proximity and interaction.

totem an animal or plant believed to be spiritually connected to a group of people.

totemism a belief and classification system in which a group of humans claims a spiritual kinship with a plant or animal that serves as the group's emblem.

transhumant pastoralism herding in a regular, patterned movement from one location to another.

trickster an animal spirit deity who is very lively and clever and gets into trouble through thoughtless or unconventional actions.

zoonoses plural form of *zoonosis*, singular; diseases transmitted from animals to humans, usually involving a wild animal host. Many zoonoses mutate and become more virulent in their human hosts (e.g., COVID-19, measles, HIV, influenza).

Summary

Animals play essential roles in many areas of human life. While it may be difficult to define an animal, and sometimes controversial to speak the scientific truth that human are animals, too, the continuum between *us* and *them* is incontrovertible. In describing animals, anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss said that they are "good to think" of (1963, 89) because they show up prolifically in our cultures. Human-animal scholars often use a research approach known as multispecies ethnography as a way of understanding the symbiosis between humans and animals.

Of all animal species, the dog has played the most transformative role in human cultures historically. An early domesticate, dogs have served as guards, hunters, herders, transport, food, and (most commonly) companions in many different societies. Many human subsistence systems depend on animals; hunting, herding, fishing, and factory farming are the primary ways in which humans access meat. Indigenous hunters practice empathy and appreciation as ways of connecting as predators to prey, and many pastoralists have a symbiotic relationship with their herd animals, migrating periodically to provide pasture for their herds. Animals are also symbols. In totemic societies, animal species and relationships are used as ways of ordering human society; human groups have

relationships of respect with their totemic emblem and identify with some of the qualities of the animal. Animals also play important roles in oral tradition and religious systems as teachers, messengers, and sacrificial tokens. Many religious systems reflect the awareness that life is not the exclusive domain of the human species and that our world is a shared community.

Animals are also pets and cultural artifacts. Domesticated animals have been genetically reconfigured to meet the needs of human societies. This includes selectively breeding for *neotony*, a tendency for an animal to maintain both physical and behavioral juvenile characteristics. While many Indigenous societies practice pet keeping as companionship and sometimes also as a way to teach young children about animal behaviors, in modern Western societies, pet keeping has become an industry.

There are also animal trades in Western societies, from zoos, aquariums, and circuses to wild animal reserves where ecotourism generates funds to preserve wild animal habitats. Often, these industries have both negative and positive attributes. In the medical industry, animals have long served as human stand-ins for research. Increasingly today, there are laws and regulations to improve the plight of animals in medical labs, but this continues to be a challenge, and the improvements are rarely adequate. Still, the contributions that animals have made to human health and welfare have been substantial, whether in labs, on farms, in forests, or in our homes. Animals have always mattered to human beings.

Critical Thinking Questions

1. What various roles do animals play in human lives?
2. What specific roles have dogs had in human societies across time?
3. How does the relationship between people and animals vary across subsistence practices?
4. What types of relationships do Indigenous hunters have with wild animal prey?
5. How do different cultures use animal symbolism?
6. In what ways are pets a cultural artifact?
7. How do modern societies participate in the animal trade?
8. Some Western societies have made advances in protecting animals used in the medical industry. Do you believe these advances are sufficient, or should societies continue to push for reform?

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CHAPTER 19
Indigenous Anthropology

Figure 19.1 David Lewis, the author of this chapter, with a Kalapuya canoe donated to Grand Ronde Tribe by the Willamette Heritage Center. The canoe was found preserved in the clay of the Calapooia River in Oregon. (credit: Dean Rhode, Public Domain)

CHAPTER OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION The author if this chapter, David Lewis, explains his deep connection to the material:

I, David Lewis, am the author of this chapter and a Native scholar—a member of the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community of Oregon. I am a descendant of the original Santiam Kalapuya, Takelma, and Chinook tribes of western Oregon. I connect the real-world problems facing Indigenous peoples to the overwhelming lack of knowledge about Native peoples held by most non-Native people in American society. I have experience researching Indigenous peoples throughout the Pacific Rim, but in my PhD work, I have focused on the Native peoples of Oregon.

Scholars of Indigenous peoples will normally focus on one or a few Indigenous cultures in their work, but in any region, a cross section can be found of the sociopolitical themes present in a global context. Because of my research focus, this chapter contains mainly examples from Oregon and the Northwest Coast, with the inclusion of a few other case studies and examples from other regions. This chapter privileges North American subjects over global Indigenous subjects. Regardless of this focus, be aware that most of the topics discussed

here exist in some form in all global Indigenous cultures, especially those that have undergone colonization and a struggle for sovereignty and rights, which include nearly all Indigenous peoples today.

19.1 Indigenous Peoples

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Name different terms used for Indigenous peoples and describe the history and current connotations of each.
- Explain what is meant by the statement that Indigenous peoples have become minorities in their own lands.
- Define blood quantum and explain its current application.
- Explain what is meant by the phrases "urban Indian" and "reservation Indian" and describe social and cultural characteristics associated with each.
- Provide two examples of 20th-century challenges experienced by Native peoples in the United States.
- Explain the need for Native perspectives in studies about Native peoples, using the debate over oral histories as an example.

Indigenous peoples are those peoples who are the original human populations of a land. They are also referred to as Native peoples, tribal peoples, tribes, First Nations peoples, and Aboriginal peoples. In the United States, they are often referred to as American Indians or Native Americans. The terms used to refer to Indigenous peoples are contextualized by the nation or territory they are a part of. For instance, in the United States as a whole, the more general term is currently Native Americans, but in the southwest portion of the United States, American Indians is quite common, while in Alaska and Canada these peoples refer to themselves as First Nations. Hawaiian Indigenous peoples prefer the term Hawaiian. In Mexico, Indigenous peoples are called *la gente indígena de México*. In Australia, the commonly accepted terms are Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples, referring to two broad but distinct cultural groups, and Indigenous Australians, referring collectively to both.

Terms used for Indigenous peoples often reflect political, social, and economic systems. **Indians** is a term that was once very commonly used in the United States to describe the nation's original inhabitants. The word is a significant part of the legal and political history of these peoples, appearing in hundreds of treaties and thousands of federal documents pertaining to legal rights. But many "Indian" people do not like the word because it was first imposed by Christopher Columbus, who mistakenly thought that his journey across the Atlantic Ocean had landed him in India. Pointing out that the term *Indian* is a case of mistaken identity, many Indigenous peoples prefer to be labeled by their specific tribal names. There is not one mind about which terms to use for Indigenous peoples. There are scholars who refuse to use words such as *Indian* and scholars who embrace the word. Some scholars advocate changing the use of the term *Indian* in history books and historical documents. However, changing historic texts alters the original expression and the meanings associated with it. To change terms in this context would literally change history and mislead students of this history.

There has been another tendency in American culture to misuse the term *Native American* to refer to a single monoculture. The majority of Americans have never spent time with Native individuals or engaged in any studies of Native peoples and thus do not have any true knowledge of actual Indigenous cultures. Until recently, Native cultures and Native history have not been accurately covered in educational institutions. Only in the past decade has there been significant movement toward offering accurate characterizations of Native peoples in public schools in the United States. While this is a positive development, stereotyping of and even racism toward Native peoples remain. The most accepted and appropriate way to refer to any Indigenous person is to use their actual tribal association, if known, rather than a general term such as Native American.

The scholarly debate over these words is somewhat separate from the way the terms are used in Native communities. Many Indigenous communities have no issue with the word *Indian* and think the whole debate over word choice is a distraction from the real-world problems that affect their communities, such as poverty, substance use issues, poor health care, and inadequate education.

Minorities in Their Own Lands

Indigenous peoples are thought of as minorities in most countries. Many colonizing peoples sought to eliminate Indigenous peoples and practiced various strategies to reduce their power to control land and natural resources and even to maintain their cultures and identities. Historically, adult Indigenous people, and even some young people, were forced to work for colonizers, often doing hard labor or other menial tasks, without any opportunities to accumulate wealth or claim a position of higher class. Christianity in various forms was forced on Indigenous peoples through government policies. Children were either not offered any education at all or forced into **boarding schools** where they were required to adopt the colonial culture. In this manner, many Indigenous people lost touch with their cultural heritage, and most Indigenous groups dwindled in number, some disappearing altogether. This trend was particularly pronounced in Latin American countries. Most people living in these countries today have some Indigenous ancestry, but as Indigenous identities have been so discouraged, few openly identify with this portion of their heritage, choosing to focus on their White and/or Spanish identities. It is evident that **assimilation** pressures, the process of changing the culture of a person or group of people to some other culture, through socialization or education, have largely succeeded when remaining peoples who identify as Indigenous become minorities within their own native territories.

FIGURE 19.2 Chemawa Indian Training School in Salem, Oregon (left) and members of the Chemawa Indian School battalion in 1914. (right) This boarding school was created in 1885 and is still operating today. Education policy before the 1970s focused on assimilating Native peoples. Current policies are more supportive of Native culture. (credit: left, "Chemawa Indian School, Winowa Hall, 5495 Chugach Street Northeast, Salem, Marion, OR" by Steve Viale/Library of Congress/Wikimedia Commons, Public Domain; right, *The Chemawa American*/Wikimedia Commons, Public Domain)

Many Native Americans, along with members of other Indigenous groups such as the **Maori** of New Zealand, do not like to be categorized as minority groups in their own homelands. Native Americans in the United States and the Maori tribes of New Zealand have treaties and sovereign rights that accord them access to and ownership of resources that other immigrant minority groups do not have. Some federal funding for programs is allotted to "minority groups" as a whole, including Native peoples. The Native peoples meant to benefit from this funding have commented that this approach does not recognize the special relationships the treaty-bound Indigenous peoples have with the state. The Maori especially have asked not to be considered a minority group. Instead, they wish to claim rights granted them by the Treaty of Waitangi to the services and resources of the federal New Zealand government.

FIGURE 19.3 This illustration, done by Maori artist Ōriwa Tahupōtiki Haddon, depicts Maori chiefs signing the Treaty of Waitangi with representatives of the British Crown in 1840. This treaty is recognized as granting the Maori people rights to the services and resources of the federal New Zealand government. (credit: "The Signing of the Treaty of Waitangi" by Ōriwa Haddon/Archives New Zealand/flickr, CC BY 2.0)

Membership in a Tribal Community

Tribal relations among mixed-race Indigenous people in the United States are governed according to a series of rights first created through federal laws and policies, then later adopted by individual tribal nations. Tribal nations now have the right to manage their own membership laws and policies, with each tribe setting its own **blood quantum** rules for membership. *Blood quantum* refers to a genealogical relationship to one's original tribal people. Full-blooded Native people issue from parents who are both full-blooded members of a tribe, while half-blooded Native people have parents or grandparents who have at least 50 percent Native blood. A person can even be a full-blooded Native, with parents from two tribes, but be considered half-blooded by the tribe they are enrolled in because the tribe only acknowledges the Indigenous blood from the enrollment tribe (Ellinghaus 2017). Some of the terms for people of mixed heritage in the Americas are **mestizo** (common in Latin America) and **Métis** (common in Canada). Some nations, such as Canada, assign different rights to people of mixed Indigenous heritage; Métis communities are accorded different rights from First Nations communities.

Although Indigenous heritage is preferred in most Native communities, the rate of outmarriage is such that pure Indigenous bloodlines are becoming rare. In the United States, most Native people have mixed heritage. An exception is the Navajo Nation, which has a significant number of full-blooded Navajo members due to its large population of more than 300,000 members.

Normally, individuals have to prove they have a blood quantum of a certain percentage to enroll in a tribe. Some tribal policies require a strict accounting of only the bloodlines that originate within that tribe. Other tribes allow for any Indigenous blood as counting toward membership requirements. The latter policy is closer to the cultural practices followed by many Native peoples before they became wards of the federal government. It was common for many tribes to adopt people who moved into their area and took up their culture. In addition, marriage customs of all tribes, which disallowed marriage between individuals too closely related, encouraged members to marry outside of their village or tribe. Spouses brought into a village would be adopted without discrimination. In tribes in Oregon, women would more commonly go to their husbands' villages. In other cultures, such as that of the Seneca of the Northeast, men would move to their wives' villages.

Some scholars view blood quantum as a means for the United States government to prevent people from claiming tribal heritage, ultimately causing tribes to self-terminate. This view is not shared by all tribal peoples. Blood quantum was written into most tribal constitutions in the 1930s as a means of determining tribal citizenships. This policy has caused numerous problems in contemporary communities, where tribal

members sometimes attempt to marry their cousins in order to "marshal" their blood—that is, raise or maintain the percentage of blood quantum in their offspring (Nenemay 2005). Scholars have noted that most tribes will continue to lose members due to outmarriage unless membership requirements are changed, even though most blood quantum requirements are currently well below one-half. Many tribal communities are shifting policies so that individuals can claim tribal membership by establishing descent from an enrolled tribal member (Thornton 1997).

Membership in the Grand Ronde tribe of Oregon requires a 1/16 blood quantum of Grand Ronde blood and an ancestor or parent who was on a tribal roll or record in the past. The tribe counts only genealogical connection to original tribal residents of the reservation. Unfortunately, many people have moved on and off the reservation over the years, and records have not been accurately maintained. Proving past residence on the reservation is difficult. In addition, more restrictive changes to the membership requirements since 1999 have reduced the number of members. One controversial change made in 1999 requires that the parent of a potential new member must have been enrolled in the tribe at the time of the prospective member's birth. This change denies membership to the children of those who became members after having children and the children of those born during the period between 1956 and 1983, when tribal rolls were not maintained. One result has been split families, in which younger children born when their parents were on the tribal roll are deemed members, while their older siblings are not eligible for enrollment.

The issue has become politicized at the reservation, with some enrolled members fearing that a flood of new enrollments would impact services and funds and others wanting to expand enrollment to allow more descendants into the tribe. These questions of identity, both political and social, will likely continue to excite debate in the coming decades, as many tribes acknowledge that unless they change membership requirements, they may cease to exist in the future.

Tribal Groups and Communities

Most Indigenous communities are extremely poor and face a number of challenges resulting from centuries of colonization, settlement, and exploitation. In the United States, Canada, and Australia, Indigenous peoples were forcibly relocated to **reservations**, often marginal lands "set aside" for Native peoples after European settlers and colonists claimed their original homelands. Many North American reservation communities have been, and continue to be, kept in a state of perpetual poverty. Reservations typically have few employment opportunities, high substance addiction and alcoholism rates, and high morbidity rates caused by long-term persistent poverty. Some tribes have been successful in making good education available to young people through successes in casino development and effective management of federal education grants, but there is a significant disparity of completion rates at all levels of education. A 2011 report by the Higher Education Research Institute found that among those enrolled in four-year degree programs, approximately 17 percent of Native students completed the degree within four years, compared to 45 percent of Asian students, 43 percent of White students, 26 percent of Latinx/Latina/Latino students, and 21 percent of Black students (DeAngelo et al. 2011, 10; see also Al-Asfour and Abraham 2016).

In the United States, tribal reservations were historically prevented from developing their own industries by the Nonintercourse Act sections of the **Trade and Intercourse Acts**. This legislation made it illegal to sell products beyond the borders of a reservation, which were viewed in the same way as state borders. Tribes can petition Congress to approve a reservation-based industry, but the petition can take decades to be approved. Many reservations have languished for two centuries with few or no jobs or opportunities for Native peoples (Miller 2012). Those who leave reservations for jobs rarely return as full-time residents. Still, Indigenous people on reservations in the United States enjoy the comfort of living within their own cultures and face less discrimination in their communities than they would in White-dominated communities.

People of mixed Indigenous heritage who can "pass" as White have often done so, thus abandoning their Indigenous ancestry. Many took advantage of opportunities to move to cities and get jobs as "White" people, enjoying the pay and social benefits that went along with those jobs and social identities. This path was followed by many Native people in the United States beginning in the later 19th century. The exodus to the cities reached a peak in the 1950s and 1960s following the United States' **termination** of the status of 109 tribes. Termination refers to a US federal policy adopted in 1953 that voided the treaty agreements between

the federal government and Native peoples. The US government then repossessed and sold reservation property in a process called liquidation. Terminated tribal peoples were released from reservation lifeways with no money or resources. They were no longer federally recognized Native peoples and had no rights to ask for federal services or assistance. Most of the tribes that underwent termination were restored beginning in the 1970s.

Many of those who underwent termination moved to urban environments in search of work, resulting on populations of " **urban Indian**" communities. During World War II, the Keiser Shipyards in Portland employed a number of Native people, many of them women (https://openstax.org/r/oregonhistoryproject), who left regional reservations for work. The twentieth century trend of Native peoples moving to cities creating has resulted in significant populations of "urban Indians."

Today, the majority of Native people in the United States live in urban environments. This movement has created tensions within Indigenous communities. The phrase "urban Indian" has taken on negative connotations within some Indigenous contexts. Some "reservation Indians" accuse urban Natives of willingly giving up their status, land, and culture. While some urban Natives struggle with feeling disconnected from their tribal identities, many maintain a connection with reservation communities by visiting on weekends and holidays and participating in special events such as tribal government meetings.

Urban Native communities typically include groups to benefit Native people, such as educational and culture-based organizations and civic-minded business associations. Many of these groups include people from various tribes who work together to plan community spiritual activities such as powwows, support urban Indigenous food systems, or serve on culture-based committees. Tribal nations often have offices in urban communities that offer services to their citizens and serve as a site of sovereign activities of the tribe. Indigenous-language learning groups are now quite common in urban centers, especially at universities and tribal offices. Universities in many ways form cultural centers for urban Indigenous people, offering Native centers, employing Indigenous scholars, and funding cultural activities and events.

There are several tribal offices in Portland, Oregon, which has one of the largest concentrations of off-reservation Native people in the United States, with an estimated 40,000 people of Native descent. On the west side of town is the Portland-area office of the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde. This office hosts weekly cultural education programs called Lifeways, which are free to tribal community members, along with classes in wood carving, drawing, storytelling, and the Chinuk Wawa language. Other services offered to tribal members living in the Portland metro area include jobs programs, food distributions, and a large boardroom equipped for hosting formal meetings. Also in Portland are the offices of the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians (https://openstax.org/r/ConfederatedTribesofSiletzIndians), the Native American Youth and Family Center education organization, the Oregon Native American Chamber of Commerce (https://openstax.org/r/AmericanChamber), and the Columbia River Intertribal Fish Commission (https://openstax.org/r/ColumbiaRiver). Portland is the site of community organizations such as the Bow and Arrow Culture Club, which hosts annual cultural gatherings and the large intertribal Delta Park Powwow. The radio station KBOO (90.7) consistently features Native programming.

The Native population of Portland is a broad mixture of enrolled tribal people and unenrolled descendant people from throughout the United States. There are also large numbers of Indigenous peoples from other countries, with concentrations of Latina/Latino and Pacific Islander peoples. In addition, the Hawaiian community has deep roots in the region due to the inclusion of Hawaiian labor in the 19th-century fur trade of the Pacific Northwest.

20th-Century Challenges

In the 20th century, some tribes grew self-sufficient or even wealthy by harvesting or extracting the natural resources on their reservations. The land of the Osage Nation of Oklahoma was found to contain vast reserves of underground oil. Members of the nation who had oil under their allotments became wealthy, so much so that some were among the wealthiest people on the planet during the height of the oil boom. But soon after acquiring this wealth, White neighbors began marrying into the tribe. Tribal members began being murdered, and authorities were slow to launch any investigations. Eventually, White relatives ended up owning much of the Osage lands. The story of the Osage murders is documented in several books, including *Killers of the*

Flower Moon by David Grann, which was made into a motion picture directed by Martin Scorsese.

FIGURE 19.4 An oil field in the town of Denoya, on the Osage Reservation. Although the discovery of oil on their lands initially brought some members of the Osage Nation considerable wealth, it also made them the target of unscrupulous White neighbors. Many Osage were murdered, with their White relatives coming into possession of their land and the petroleum beneath it. (credit: Oklahoma Historical Society/Wikimedia Commons, Public Domain)

In a similar story, the Klamath tribe of Oregon established a very successful logging operation on their reservation in the early 20th century. The reservation included a million acres of ponderosa pine. The Klamath people established sawmills and sold the timber off the reservation, becoming quite wealthy. They even built an airfield on the reservation. But their prosperity did not last. The federal government had been serving as the bank administrator of the Klamath money and managing their profits. It became apparent that some money had gone missing and that the land was being poorly managed by federal agents. The tribe successfully sued the government for mismanagement, but they only received a percentage of the money they were owed.

In the 1940s, tribal liquidation/termination began to be discussed with the Klamath people. Some Klamath people initially liked the idea of termination because it would free them from control by the federal government. They were initially told they would receive their reservation land, but the government later told them the land would be sold. Termination began in 1954. In 1961, the remaining unsold reservation lands were turned into the Winema National Forest. Klamath members were forced to leave their homelands and find employment in regional cities. The result of termination was that the Klamath lost their land and many rights as Native people. Their population was dispersed, making it difficult to keep the culture alive. By the 1960s, most of the tribal languages were extinct, and many people had lost connections with their tribal past. In the 1970s, some of the tribal elders, many who had remained in the vicinity of the original reservation, began activating for restoration. The tribe was restored in 1983 (Lewis 2009).

An extreme example of the disenfranchisement of Native people is the movement of Indigenous peoples who were part of the Okie migration of the 1930s. The Okie migration was to the movement of people out of Oklahoma during the Dust Bowl crisis, in which agriculture yields collapsed due to drought and poor land management practices. Topsoil blew away in large clouds, and thousands lost their land and their jobs. These thousands included a large percentage of mixed-blood Native people. Those who could no longer earn a living farming the degraded land moved west in search of work in Arizona, California, Oregon, and other western states. These migrants led difficult lives, working at low-paying jobs and moving constantly in search of seasonal work. One result of this movement westward was a shift of Native populations to the West and a related collapse of tribal populations in Oklahoma. Among the artifacts of the Okie migration are photographs taken by federal workers who visited the migrant encampments. Likely the most famous of these images is the one now known as *Migrant Mother*, taken in 1936 by photographer Dorothea Lange. The subject of Lange's photo has been identified as Florence Thompson, a Cherokee woman.

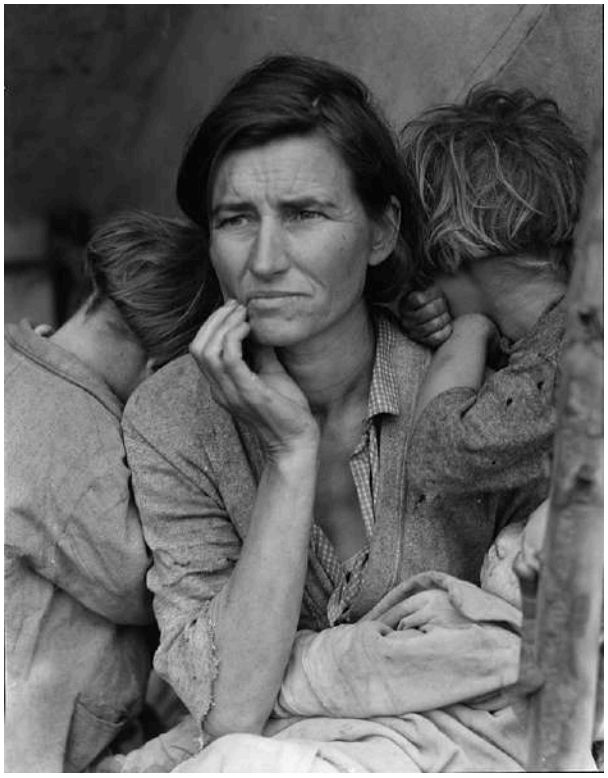

FIGURE 19.5 *Migrant Mother*, one of the most famous photographs taken by Dorothea Lange, features a Cherokee woman, Florence Thompson. Like many people during this period, she and her family moved from place to place following farm work during the Dust Bowl crisis of the 1930s. (credit: "Destitute Pea Pickers in California. Mother of Seven Children. Age Thirty-Two. Nipomo, California" by Dorothea Lange/Library of Congress, Public Domain)

By the 1970s, most Indigenous people in the United States were still very poor. In this period, a number of laws were passed to help Native people. These laws gave tribes the rights to control their cultures, educate their people, and administer their own foster care. These rights were difficult to act on, however, without financial resources. In the 1980s, tribes began seeking new ways of making money to take care of their citizens. In 1988, Congress passed the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act. This law allowed Native peoples to establish casinos on their reservations. The caveat is that tribes must "compact" with the state they reside in to secure the right to operate a casino. Many Indigenous people have criticized this stipulation, stating that needing to ask permission places them at a lower level of sovereignty than the states. According to the federal government's own laws, tribal reservations are federal trust lands with sovereignty on par of that of the states. Still, most tribes have compacted with the states they reside within, agreeing as part of the compact to cede a percentage of casino profits to the state to aid with funding for services such as education and road maintenance. Tribal casino profits have made it possible for many tribes to establish fully operational governments that offer services and programs for their members in areas such as health care, housing, education, and jobs.

There have been challenges to tribes' rights to establish casinos, the most notable occurring in California during Arnold Schwarzenegger's tenure as governor. Governor Schwarzenegger refused for years to meet with Native representatives to discuss a statewide casino compact, even after voters overwhelmingly approved tribal casinos twice. The tribes felt that Nevada casino operators, who could lose significant revenue from the competition, were influencing the California government. The tribes won a lawsuit in 1999, and many tribes subsequently signed compacts with the state. There have been continued lawsuits against California stating that the compacts require too large a portion of casino profits. Still, tribes in California now have the right to establish casinos, and the income is greatly improving services to tribal members.

FIGURE 19.6 Morongo Casino Resort and Spa in Cabazon, California, operated by the Morongo Band of Cahuilla Mission Indians, is one of hundreds of tribal casinos across the United States. Many have incorporated cultural elements into their design, such as Morongo's woven net design. (credit: "Morongo Casino Resort & Spa Is an Indian Gaming Casino, of the Morongo Band of Cahuilla Mission Indians, Located in Cabazon, California" by Carol M. Highsmith/Library of Congress, Public Domain)

Perspectives

Indigenous peoples have undergone some five centuries of colonization. During this time, the societal structures of the colonial states have emphasized the perspectives of non-Indigenous peoples, broadly identified as White people. Histories have been written to benefit White people, to support their colonizing cultures and to legitimize their takeover of vast territories from Indigenous peoples. Minority perspectives, including Indigenous perspectives, have not been emphasized and have even been sometimes intentionally repressed. Indigenous peoples have struggled with disempowerment in their sovereign relations with state systems and in legal proceedings over their sovereign rights. Many Indigenous peoples still struggle to prove that they are part of a legitimate nation. State-sponsored erasure of Native culture and history has caused losses of and changes to tribal cultures and languages.

Beginning the later 20th century, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars have noted that history has long been presented in a way that is biased toward a White perspective. This bias has been critiqued as a form of systemic racism. In most academic institutions, until relatively recently, most if not all professors were White. There were few opportunities for Indigenous people to establish positions of influence over the presentation and study of Indigenous history and culture. **Native studies** programs began to be developed at various universities in the United States in the 1970s, a movement that coincided with greater opportunities for Indigenous scholars to conduct research on their own peoples. Indigenous people are now actively working to write their own histories and describe their cultures and philosophies from Indigenous perspectives. Indigenous scholarship has made great strides, but there is still a hesitancy in academia to allow Indigenous people to establish positions of authority or introduce Indigenous ways of thinking. Among the academic disciplines, anthropology in particular has made strong progress in recognizing the value and validity of Indigenous perspectives.

An interesting example of recent changes in approaches to Indigenous perspectives is the ongoing debate over **oral histories**. For much of the 19th and 20th centuries, Indigenous "myth texts" were collected from tribes and studied by anthropologists, linguists, and folklorists. Studies of this material typically utilized a linguistic or philosophical framework. The texts were understood, much like Greek mythology, as supernatural stories with a special focus on the godlike animals appearing in them, such as Coyote, Raven, and Blue Jay. Also of interest to early scholars of such texts were their performative aspects and the metaphorical commentary they offered about human existence. A debate emerged between some scholars such as Dell Hymes, who noted that the texts were most valuable as "original texts" or direct ethnographic translations, and others such as Claude Levi-Strauss, who concluded that there was no original text and every version was plagiarized from a previous storyteller. In this authenticity debate, the texts were treated as literature, with little recognition of the

historical events appearing in many of the stories (Hegeman 1989). This inability to see the historical value of these texts reflects a bias toward written material and against knowledge presented via **oral tradition**.

Read about how translations of oral histories are analyzed and updated in the online journal *Quartux* (https://openstax.org/r/onlinejournal).

VIDEO

David Lewis, the author of this chapter, discusses the loss of many native languages and reads translations of "A Kalapuya Prophecy (https://openstax.org/r/davidlewisexpanding)".

Many of these assumptions about myth texts have changed in the past 70 years. One study of Crater Lake in Oregon, conducted by geologists in the 1940s, determined that the lake was on the site of what once had been a large volcano, Mount Mazama, known as Moy Yaina by the Indigenous people of the area. When the volcano exploded, the top of the mountain fell inside the cone and formed a caldera, which in time filled with water, resulting in Crater Lake. This event happened some 7,000 years ago. This established geological event is reflected in Indigenous oral traditions. A Klamath tribal oral history tells the story of two mountains, Moy Yaina and Mlaiksi (Mount Shasta in California), having a fight. The Klamath oral history clearly delineates a double volcanic event, with Moy Yaina and Mlaiksi erupting at the same time, but Moy Yaina erupted with a larger explosion and therefore lost the fight. Geological evidence of the explosion spoken of in this myth indicates that Klamath oral history does indeed reflect actual history. Similar oral histories of thousands of Indigenous peoples are now acknowledged to reflect many natural events, especially those that significantly changed the earth in some manner. Oral histories of tsunamis, Ice Age floods, volcanic eruptions, catastrophic fires, and other events are now acknowledged in the stories of many peoples. New understandings of the legitimacy of Indigenous oral histories are leading to increased research into numerous areas of Indigenous knowledge systems.

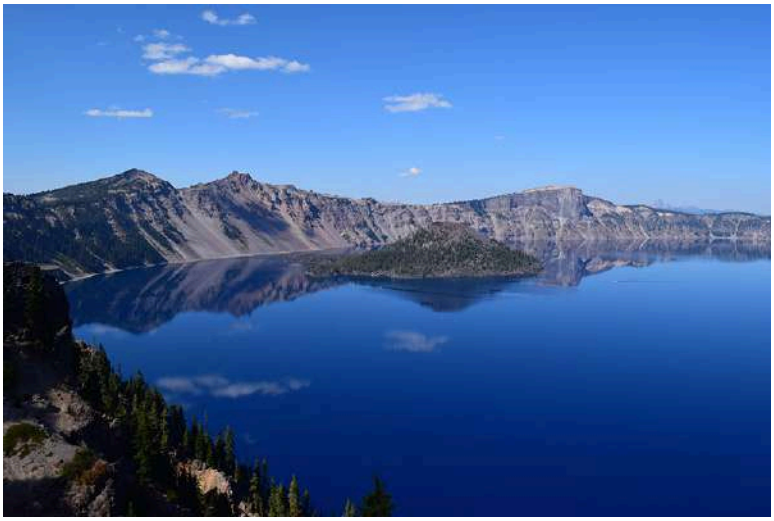

FIGURE 19.7 Crater Lake, Oregon, and the remains of Mount Mazama. Wizard Island in the center is the original top of Mazama, having fallen into the volcanic cone some 7,000 years ago. A record of these geological events is evident in the oral traditions of Indigenous peoples native to this area. (credit: "Crater Lake National Park, United States" by Amy Hanley/Unsplash, Public Domain)

ETHNOGRAPHIC SKETCHES

Kalapuyan Traditional Ecological Knowledge

Written by David Lewis.

The Kalapuya of the Willamette Valley were native to the interior lands of western Oregon. The Willamette

River and its tributaries drained the Willamette Valley and joined with the Columbia River in the vicinity of present-day Portland. The river served as a highway of trade and travel about the valley and to the trading center at Willamette Falls. The Kalapuya had salmon runs, but not the concentration of salmon fishery sites seen on the Columbia River. They did have expansive prairies and oak savannas that supported a vegetable-rich lifeway. Hunting of deer and elk was always a part of their lives, but they followed a lifestyle of camping at root-digging sites through the summers. Root camps would be established in midsummer near a camas field. They would dig camas for a week, then cook the camas in pit ovens while in the camp. The camas bulbs would cook for three to four days in the underground ovens, changing to a brown color. The cooked bulbs became sweet and were highly desired by the Kalapuya. Cooked camas would be stored in cool underground storage spaces or hung in plank houses for wintertime use. The Kalapuya would store many types of roots and grains in this manner and would also prepare dried salmon and meat for winter storage. In the fall, acorns and hazelnuts could be gathered, and in marshy lakes or the Willamette slough, wapato could be gathered in great quantities. Wapato, or Indian potato, would be stored or traded to other peoples for other foods and trade items. The Tualatin Kalapuya, a northern Willamette Valley tribe of Kalapuya, especially had much wapato at Wapato Lake as well as large amounts of oak savanna on the Tualatin plains. Almost all foods were gathered and prepared in the encampments and then brought back to the villages later. Acorns would be gathered, shelled, and left to rest in cool creeks to let the tannins leach out, then dried and ground into a meal. From this, the Kalapuya would create a mush cooked in woven baskets. Hazelnuts would be shelled and dried on hot rocks in the sun, then eaten on the spot or saved for later. Hazel switches would be harvested from the bushes to make strong baskets. At other times of the year, some Kalapuya would travel into the mountains to pick berries or gather weaving materials for making baskets. Baskets, hats, and large woven mats made from tules and cattails for sitting or lying on would be used by the maker or traded for other items. Most weaving materials would have to be dried for a year before being rehydrated and woven into a useful basket.

The Kalapuya were very community oriented. If other Kalapuya or neighboring tribal peoples were starving, they would help them and feed them. Trade could happen at any time of the year, but in the winters, Kalapuya might approach neighboring tribes to trade for additional food or wealth items they desired. Dried and smoked salmon could be acquired from the Clackamas and Multnomah, who would prepare plenty when the salmon ran. From the Coos, they acquired seashells. The Klickitat had exceptionally good baskets, and the Chinook had canoes and prepared salmon as well as items from throughout the trading sphere of the Columbia River. The Kalapuya specialized in camas and root digging and were dependent on other tribes for quantities of other products.

19.2 Colonization and Anthropology

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Articulate the contributions of Vine Deloria Jr. to the critique of anthropology and the growth of Native studies and Native scholarship.
- Define the practice of “othering” and explain how it has affected and continues to affect Indigenous people in the United States.
- Evaluate the historic issues related to anthropologists serving as cultural experts.
- Relate how anthropology has aided colonialism and propose some ways these practices may be reversed.

Anthropology has been criticized by numerous anthropologists and other scholars as participating in the colonization of Indigenous societies. While settlers took land and resources from tribes and forced them to relocate to reservations, anthropologists gathered knowledge from Indigenous peoples for their own purposes. Another critique has focused on the right claimed by some anthropologists to speak for Indigenous peoples. Books written by early anthropologists have been viewed as disempowering Native peoples, claiming a place of greater legitimacy than the perspectives of Native people themselves. Some anthropologists in the late 19th and early 20th centuries collected images of Indigenous people posed and dressed to fit a stereotypical conception of “Indians.” Edward S. Curtis was one such anthropologist and photographer. Although his photos are rendered beautifully, they reflect his own conceptions rather than the realities of life for Native peoples at

the time the photographs were taken. Curtis and many of his contemporaries are now critiqued for privileging their personal perspectives over the stark realities of Native peoples impoverished on reservations.

FIGURE 19.8 This photograph of three Sioux chiefs, taken by Edward S. Curtis circa 1905, does not reflect actual cultural practices. At this time, these men were living on a Sioux reservation and would have dressed much like other Americans. Curtis posed these men on horses and in traditional regalia to please an American audience eager to see stereotypical images. (Credit: "Sioux Chiefs" by Edward S. Curtis/Library of Congress, public domain)

Deloria's Critique

These criticisms of anthropology gained strength in the 1960s, with several Native scholars questioning in particular the higher value assigned to academic scholarship than to the voices of Native peoples. These critiques caused many scholars to reassess the nature of anthropological research.

Vine Deloria Jr. was a Sioux scholar who gained fame in the 1960s. Deloria openly challenged the legitimacy of anthropology as a discipline, criticizing anthropologists for benefiting from their research projects, whether through selling books or achieving tenure at their universities, while those they studied rarely received any benefits. Deloria developed his evaluation over a long career consisting of five decades of scholarship. One focus of his scholarship was the biased nature of supposedly "objective" scientific research, which he called "an entrenched state religion" (1997, 211). He also accused Western academics of relying on notions of Native peoples that were biased by stereotypes and assumptions.

In many ways, Deloria inspired the growth of Native studies programs. His critical arguments resonated with tribal communities and were, and still are, an inspiration to generations of Indigenous scholars. His critiques have resonated with the discipline as a whole as well, resulting in adjustments and changes to anthropological methods and practices. There are now many more Indigenous and minority scholars in anthropology than ever before, in part aided by Deloria's critique. Maori scholar Linda T. Smith describes the mission of these scholars in this way: "Telling our stories from the past, reclaiming the past, giving testimony to the injustices of the past are all strategies which are commonly employed by Indigenous peoples struggling for justice. . . . The need to tell our stories remains the powerful imperative of a powerful form of resistance" (2021, 38). Indigenous specialties have been developed in most areas of anthropology, including Indigenous anthropology and Indigenous archaeology. Deloria's criticisms have also been influential in the creation of the fields of public anthropology, public archaeology, and applied anthropology, all of which seek to establish a closer relationship with research subjects and apply research findings to address current problems.

The Othering of Indigenous Peoples

Othering, discussed earlier in this text, refers to viewing those from different cultures or backgrounds as "other," or inherently and importantly different from oneself or one's own "type" of people. Indigenous peoples

have been particularly affected by a tendency to be viewed as other by White society. As Linda Smith writes, "A critical aspect of the struggle for self-determination has involved questions relating to our history as Indigenous peoples and a critique of how we, as the Other, have been represented or excluded from various accounts" (2021, 31). The "otherness" that Smith refers to reflects tendencies both to not think about Indigenous peoples at all and to deliberately deny Indigenous cultures an equal share of the history of their land. Indigenous histories and contexts are viewed as something "other" than White histories and contexts and are largely ignored. Othering happens in every conceivable context and affects almost all aspects of social existence, including social mobility, civil rights, getting a job, and applying for grants and funding. Othering figures strongly into sometimes subconscious determinations as to whether a person is the right type of person for a specific position or role. Othering is a form of discrimination and racism. Othering has played a large role in recent discussions of policing in the United States. Othering is influential in the ongoing issue of missing and murdered Indigenous women. Many police agencies are not investigating missing Indigenous women because they are the other—Indigenous—and the women are singled out by predators because they are clearly Indigenous.

Cultural Experts and Authority

Anthropologists have noted the value of tribal cultural experts to their research projects. A cultural expert is immersed in the culture of their Indigenous community and has insight into the intricacies of their community. Cultural experts have been used by anthropologists since the beginnings of anthropology. However, when reporting information provided by cultural experts, anthropologists have too often taken a position of authority that somewhat disempowers these same cultural experts. Those learning about an Indigenous society will typically turn to the published ethnographic literature on the subject. This literature will most likely present an outsider's understanding of that society, frozen in a specific time frame and based on a single research project. This gives the readers a warped understanding of the culture they are interested in, only completely valid within the time frame of the study.

Cultural experts, on the other hand, adapt and modify their insights and knowledge as they age. It is now common for researchers to seek out cultural experts to provide contemporary understandings of a culture and society. In addition, many researchers will now form collaborations with cultural experts that assign ownership and authorship to the cultural expert or the culture they are researching. Within this approach, the anthropologist becomes the compiler or editor of any publications, or perhaps the lead author of a team of authors. Many Indigenous scholars now conduct their own research, taking the roles of lead authors and editors of studies. Tribes are also taking control of research projects, contracting with anthropologists who agree to conduct the work with significant tribal input and review.

Indigenous Societies as Colonial Societies

Indigenous societies are in many ways colonial societies. Most Indigenous people are of mixed heritage, and Indigenous cultures have changed in ways that make them more similar to the surrounding White communities. As just one example, many Indigenous peoples have adopted Christianity as their primary religion. But in most Indigenous communities, there is space for Indigenous traditions and spirituality as well. Sometimes, White and Indigenous cultures exist parallel to one another. Such hybrid societies are often criticized by Indigenous and non-Indigenous people as no longer being Native or Indigenous, but this criticism reflects an understanding of what it means to be Indigenous that is frozen in time. Many people envision Native cultures as they existed in the 19th century as being the "true" cultures, while the cultures of Native people living in urban suburbs with automobiles and ranch-style houses are viewed as tainted or inauthentic. Culture is not a static thing; it is dynamic, constantly changing to fit the context of the present. Native peoples continue to maintain a cultural core that is Indigenous while they adopt the technology and trappings of contemporary society.

Decolonizing Anthropology

In the 1970s, a movement began to "decolonize anthropology." This movement seeks to address anthropology's role in collecting and taking ownership of Native knowledge and culture and to speak out against anthropological analyses and products that support colonialism. One aspect of anthropological practice that has been particularly criticized is a tendency to treat Native people purely as research subjects,

without acknowledging their agency or their rights, such as the right to protect their buried ancestors or control their knowledge, stories, and even place names. As part of the "decolonizing" movement, scholars began developing research protocols to address these criticisms. The Indigenous perspective has begun to be recognized as valuable, and people from diverse backgrounds have been welcomed into the discipline.

In the 1990s, the Southwest Oregon Research Project (SWORP) was established to collect and return to those to whom it pertained knowledge collected by anthropologists and other researchers. The SWORP project began under the leadership of George Wasson of the Coquille Indian Tribe of Oregon. Wasson worked with Smithsonian Institution and University of Oregon administrations to copy and collect documents pertaining to some 60 western Oregon tribes and return the resultant collection to the university archives. The project eventually hosted three trips to Washington, DC, to collect more than 200,000 pages of anthropological and federal documents from the National Anthropological Archives and the National Archives and Records Administration. The collections were then organized and hosted in the University of Oregon Special Collections. In 1995 and 2001, copies of these documents were given to some 17 tribes in Oregon and the surrounding region. This project served in a very real sense to decolonize the anthropology of the past by returning Indigenous knowledge to tribal peoples.

Peoples receiving the SWORP collections have been free to access the knowledge collected from their ancestors over a 100-year time period, from the 1850s to 1950, and build on this knowledge with further projects to restore tribal culture. In one instance of a successful restoration, techniques for creating the traditional canoes of the Clackamas Chinook were studied in an effort to restore both the production and use of these canoes in the Northwest region. Scholars made use of a SWORP collection of files created by anthropologist Philip Drucker, which described traditional methods of construction and traditional designs. Since the 1990s, there has been a marked resurgence in traditional canoe construction on the Northwest Coast. Tribal nations along the Northwest Coast now undertake an annual canoe journey that involves hundreds of communities and thousands of tribal members. These developments have been aided by the preservation and return of cultural knowledge.

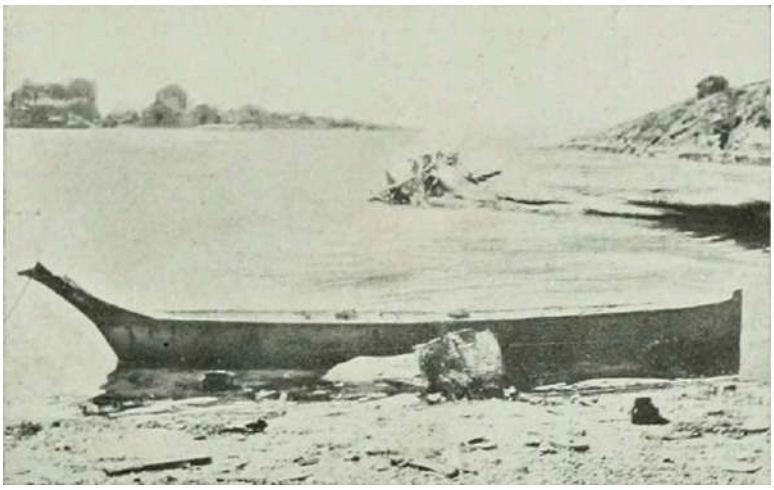

FIGURE 19.9 A Chinook canoe built using traditional construction techniques, circa 1825. The surface of these canoes was typically charred to prevent decay.(credit: "Image from Page 286 of 'The American Museum Journal' (c1900-[1918])" by American Museum of Natural History/Internet Archive Book Images/flickr, Public Domain)

FIGURE 19.10 A crew from the Grande Ronde Tribe launch a Chinook canoe from the beach at the Swinomish Tribal Community Center. In recent decades, there has been a revival in traditional canoe construction on the Northwest Coast. (credit: "Canoe Crew Preparing for Launch" by John Clemens, US Geological Survey/flickr, Public Domain)

Some tribal scholars have raised concerns that many ethnographic and anthropological field notes are untrustworthy sources because they are the products of biased research practices and may reflect anthropologists' efforts to confirm previously conceived ideas about tribal peoples. The critics rightly note that some anthropologists may have altered their findings to fit stereotypical notions. Tribal peoples have thus been wary of relying solely on field notes to reconstruct cultural practices, taking care to compare the field notes of anthropologists with elder knowledge to devise valid restoration projects for culture and language.

The existence of field notes themselves is somewhat controversial among Native communities. Some Indigenous people have criticized the act of writing down Indigenous stories, which were normally oral literatures. This same criticism calls into question the legitimacy of all field notes collected from peoples who rely on oral histories. Some Indigenous scholars thus refuse to use any ethnographic notes, viewing them as biased documents. However, another perspective is that many of these field notes were collected from tribal cultural experts who willingly participated in the collection of their stories and knowledge. Many of these cultural experts were elders in their communities who wanted to save their culture and language, not passive participants unaware of the outcomes of their work with anthropologists. From this perspective, these elders knew what they were doing and were aware that they may hold the last remaining knowledge of certain cultural practices or languages; therefore, their work and contributions need to be respected by all scholars today.

PROFILES IN ANTHROPOLOGY

Beatrice Medicine (Sihasapa and Minneconjou Lakota) 1923–2005

Personal History: David Lewis recollects: *I had an opportunity to meet Dr. Beatrice Medicine (https://openstax.org/r/appliedanthro) when she visited the University of Oregon in the early 2000s. Medicine gave numerous presentations about her work. The most impactful presentation was her study of Scandinavian revivalists who were recreating Native American traditions in Europe and Russia. She told stories of how the Lakota community met with these revivalists and decided to help them practice the culture correctly. What they had been practicing emulated Native cultures as stereotyped in Hollywood films, including a US cavalry*

charge and a tom-tom drumbeat. This was clearly inaccurate, and the Lakota decided that if the revivalists really wanted to represent Lakota culture, they should help them do it correctly. Medicine and other Lakota culture bearers then took on the responsibility of going to Europe to meet some of these groups and teach them the correct culture.

Additionally, Medicine told stories of how anthropologists who came to reservations in the 19th century were sometimes fooled by Native collaborators. She noted that some of the stories collected were made up on the spot by men who realized that they would be paid for more stories. So, they created stories of history and events for the anthropologists, earned a few extra dollars, and later made fun of the anthropologists for not really knowing the culture. Some of these stories were published in anthropologists' language texts and are now part of the legacy of the discipline. Much of the legacy of oral histories involves tribal mistrust of the products of anthropologists, considered to be inaccurate and biased—a feeling supported in part by this story. But Medicine's discerning of the reason behind the creation of new stories provides additional contexts that then partly refute the distrust of anthropologists once the intentions of the Native collaborators are known. The stories themselves are not worthless to tribal people who study them today, and they teach scholars about tribal peoples' ingenuity and humor.

Medicine's storytelling was very powerful. She did not follow the typical narrative that presented anthropology as a handmaiden of colonialism, instead showing how she, as an anthropologist, could help people understand others and apply anthropology to work out problems in the world. Medicine's series of talks at the University of Oregon was inspiring to Native scholars and provided examples of how we could use anthropology to help our peoples when we returned to our Native communities, as many will.

Area of Anthropology: Dr. Beatrice Medicine was a scholar, anthropologist, and educator known for her work in the fields of Indigenous languages and cultures, applied anthropology, gender studies, and Native history. She was born on the Standing Rock Reservation in North Dakota and spent years teaching, traveling, and working in anthropology throughout the world before returning to Standing Rock to retire. In her final years she helped build an elementary school at the reservation.

Accomplishments in the Field: Medicine was able to shift seamlessly and effectively between her roles as a Native person and an anthropologist. She had a lot of faith that anthropology could understand and recover from the effects of our colonial histories. Medicine worked to promote applied anthropology as a way for the discipline to contribute in positive ways to Native societies. She inspired many young Native scholars and anthropologists to use anthropology to help Native peoples. As one of the few Native and women anthropologists of her time, she faced and overcame many challenges posed by the paternalistic White men in the discipline.

Importance of Her Work: For her work, Medicine earned numerous awards, including a Distinguished Service Award from the American Anthropological Association (1991), the Bronislaw Malinowski Award from the Society for Applied Anthropology (1996), and the George and Louise Spindler Award for education in anthropology from the American Anthropological Association (2005). The Applied Anthropology Association established a travel award in her name, and her life's work was featured in a 2015 panel at the American Anthropological Association's annual meeting.

Medicine's most influential book is *Learning to Be an Anthropologist and Remaining "Native"*, published by the University of Illinois Press in 2001.

For more information, see the Indigenous Goddess Gang's Matriarch Monday post honoring Dr. Beatrice Medicine (https://openstax.org/r/MatriarchMonday).

19.3 Indigenous Agency and Rights

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Explain the significance of Indigenous peoples being declared "domestic dependent nations" in the United States.
- Discuss Indigenous rights to natural resources and the degree to which Native nations have been successful in asserting these rights.
- Describe some traditional techniques used by Indigenous peoples to create cultural objects as well as efforts to restore this knowledge.
- Articulate two features of Indigenous philosophies and worldviews and explain how researchers access Indigenous philosophies and worldviews.
- Describe political responses to federal government policies pertaining to Indigenous peoples in the United States.
- Articulate Indigenous critiques of the use of Indigenous names and images as mascots for sports teams.

Treaties and Removal

In the mid-19th century, the United States federal government shifted its approach toward purchasing tribal lands rather than conquering Indigenous nations. Many Native societies had already suffered greatly due to White settlement and were ready to sign **treaties** that would guarantee them protection on **federal Indian reservations**. Population loss caused by epidemic disease also played a role in many tribes' decisions to sign treaties with the federal government. Those who signed treaties received payment for lands, money for schools, and support in establishing Western farming practices in addition to land allotments on a reservation where federal authorities were to guarantee their safety.

As White settlement expanded into the western United States, Indigenous peoples both on and off federal reservations were subject to waves of removal from their lands. Areas set aside for reservations that had once seemed undesirably remote for White settlement became increasingly desirable as the White population grew. In the 1830s, tribal peoples living on reservations east of the Mississippi River were forced to move to what is now Oklahoma, then called Indian Territory. The tribes were promised that they would be able to keep their new reservation lands in perpetuity. However, when political currents changed, largely due to the pressures of European immigrants moving westward who desired land for settlement, the land formerly designated Indian Territory was opened to White settlement, and reservations diminished.

The most famous Native removal was the Cherokee Trail of Tears in 1838. After President Andrew Jackson signed the Indian Removal Act in 1830, the US Army forced an estimated 16,000 Cherokee then living in the southeast United States to walk to Indian Territory. An estimated 5,000 of these people died on the trail. The Cherokee Trail of Tears was not the only removal. Each time the United States expanded its borders into Indian Territory, tribes were forced to move to smaller reservations with less desirable, resource-poor lands. The Choctaw were removed from Florida to Oklahoma in 1831, and the Creek were removed in 1836, leading to an estimated 3,500 of their 15,000 people dying. Twenty years later, the United States assumed sole title to the lands of the Oregon Territory and removed 4,000 Native people from some 60 different tribes onto two reservations, the Coast and Grand Ronde Reservations. During the western Oregon "Trails of Tears," members of tribes then living on the temporary Table Rock and Umpqua Reservations were forced to walk more than 300 miles in the dead of winter to the Coast and Grand Ronde Reservations, with many dying from exposure. Once at the Coast and Grand Ronde Reservations, the tribes were made to live with many other tribes from five different language families and to join as one tribe on the reservations.

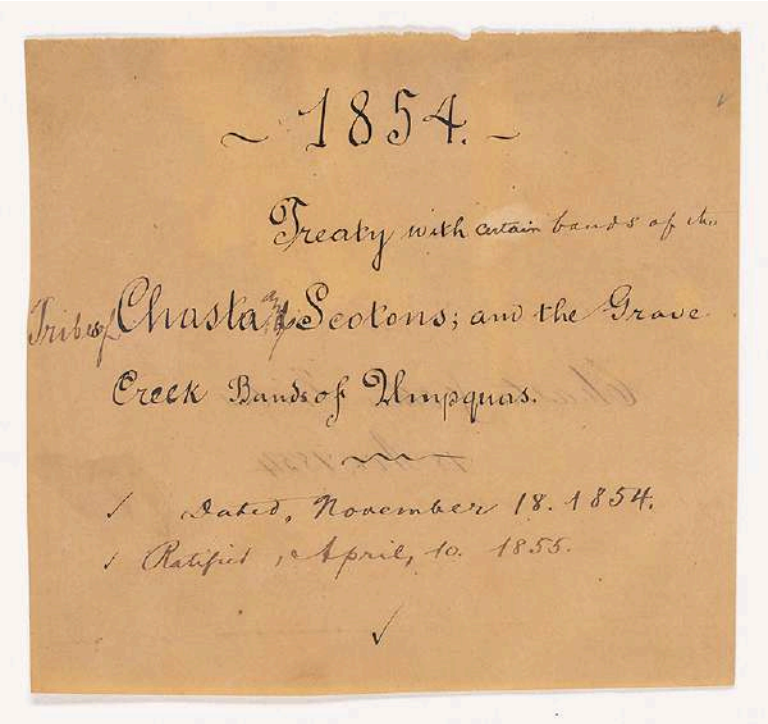

FIGURE 19.11 The cover page of a treaty with certain bands of the Chasta (Chastacosta) and Scoton tribes and the Grave Creek band of the Umpqua tribe, negotiated in 1854 and ratified in 1855. (credit: "Small Brown Cover Sheet: '1854. Treaty with Certain Bands of the Tribes of Chasta and Scotons; and the Grave Creek Bands of Umpquas. Dated, November 18, 1854. Ratified, April 10, 1855'" by US Government/US National Archives and Records Administration, Public Domain)

In all parts of the United States, life on the reservations was very challenging. Native peoples had to build their own houses and establish means of producing food and other necessities with limited resources. Federal aid, although guaranteed in the treaties, was slow to arrive and sometimes lost in transit or simply missing. For the first 20 years of the Grand Ronde Reservation, residents lived in poverty with inconsistent food and health care and poorly planned schools. On Oregon reservations, the tribal peoples did not receive their treaty rights of individual plots of farmland until at least 1873. While the government had guaranteed food, by 1860, it was clear that federal officials could not be counted on for regular food shipments. Thousands of Native people died at early ages in the first two decades due to malnutrition and newly introduced diseases. Similar stories can be told for all tribes in the United States. Problems were also caused by untrained, unqualified, and corrupt government officials who stole food, money, and supplies.

Domestic Dependent Nations

The legal status of Native nations was greatly influenced by several paternalistic rulings by the US Supreme Court in the 1830s. Three rulings known as the **Marshall court trilogy** (*Johnson v. M'Intosh*, 1823; *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia*, 1831; *Worcester v. Georgia*, 1832) determined that tribal peoples were domestic sovereign nations within the United States and dependent on the federal government to guarantee their sovereignty. These rulings meant that all reservations were "federal lands," not part of the states, with the federal government as the administrator. Native rights, therefore, must be given through federal authorities or named in treaties with the federal government.

This state of dependency has caused much consternation among Native peoples ever since. As "domestic dependent nations," many aspects of tribal societies—including management of money, land, education, health care, and other programs—have been administered by the federal government. Beyond the question of the appropriateness of this arrangement, there have been innumerable documented cases of Native peoples not receiving the services or funds they were promised. Between 1910 and the 1980s, Native peoples filed hundreds of civil cases against the federal government for mismanagement of service, land, and money. By the

1940s, there were so many cases that the federal government established a special jurisdictional court, the Indian Claims Commission, to deal with the volume of lawsuits. Under the Indian Claims Commission, many cases were consolidated to make the process more efficient. Originally planned to exist for 10 years, the court was extended into the 1970s, as hundreds of cases had been filed and it was taking decades to decide many of them. The Klamath tribe, for example, filed seven **Indian Claims** lawsuits for mismanagement of the money they earned through logging operations. The Klamath cases were combined and decided in the 1950s, with some payouts from their lawsuits extending into the 1960s. The Indian Claims Commission ended in 1978, having cleared 546 dockets and named 342 awards totaling $818,172,606.64.

One example of a successful Indian Claims case (number K-344) involved California tribal members of groups called the Mission Indians and other tribes from Northern California. These tribes had signed 18 treaties with the federal government in 1851. The treaties were never ratified, and as such, the tribes were never paid for their lands. After the treaties were found hidden in the vast record collections of the National Archives in 1905, the California tribes began working on a case for payment for the lands, for which they filed suit in 1928. The first case was not decided until 1942, with the court declaring that "the Indians of California consist of wandering bands, tribes, and small groups, who had been roving over the same territory during the period under the Spanish and Mexican ownership, before the [1848] treaty between Mexico and the United States whereby California was acquired by the United States" (Indians of California ex rel. U. S. Webb v. United States, 98 Ct. Cl. 583, 1942) This decision meant that the tribes were determined not to have a case for the return of lands and could only ask for cash payments. A second case was decided in 1964. Payments from both cases did not come until 1969, when the court gave the tribes 47 cents per acre for the 64 million acres of California lands they had once occupied, a total of $29.1 million. Court awards were subject to political maneuvering and arbitration within the House of Representatives over how much the tribes would actually receive. In the case of K-344, the award amount was based on the value of the lands in 1851, which had skyrocketed in value over the more than a century that had passed. Many tribal members were very upset by the paltry sum awarded for the wealthy lands of California.

Water, Fishing, and Agency

FIGURE 19.12 A Hupa person fishing in Trinity River in Northern California in the early 1900s. Fishing rights became a particular source of conflict between Indigenous and White people in the northwestern United States in the 1960s. (credit: "Fish-Weir across Trinity River—Hupa" by Edward S. Curtis, Smithsonian Institution/flickr, Public Domain)

From the 1960s to the 1980s, an issue of particular concern to the tribes of the northwestern part of the United States was fishing rights. The "fishing wars" were a series of political and legal battles over whether Indigenous peoples had the right to fish in their usual and accustomed places, as promised in numerous treaties.

Following the Belloni (*Sohappy v. Smith/United States v. Oregon*, 1969) and Boldt (*United States v. Washington*, 1974) court decisions, the tribes of Washington State, including those that had been terminated and not yet restored, maintained their rights to fish in their usual and accustomed ways—and their right to half the catch in the state of Washington.

These decisions affirmed tribal sovereignty rights promised in ratified treaties but had the negative consequence of causing delays in the restoration of other tribes from termination. Many sport fishermen's organizations feared that an increase in restored tribes would impact fishing for non-Natives. Both the Siletz and Grand Ronde tribes experienced delays related to fears about fishing in their federal restorations in the 1970s and 1980s. Ultimately, both tribes were forced to give up fishing and hunting rights to become federally restored. Ironically, neither the Grand Ronde nor the Siletz have fishing or hunting rights in their ratified treaties. Both tribes concluded that restoration of the tribal governments was more important than holding out for fishing and hunting rights.

FIGURE 19.13 Two Native men dip-net fishing at Celilo Falls on the Columbia River, circa 1950. Some tribes were forced to give up the right to fish in their traditional locations in return for the restoration of their tribal status. (credit: "Men Fishing at Celilo Falls on the Columbia River" by Gerald W. Williams/OSU Special Collections & Archives/flickr, Public Domain)

The Klamath tribe of Oregon was terminated in the 1950s, along with tribes in California, including the Karuk and Yurok, all of whom traditionally relied on fish from the Klamath River. In the 1970s and 1980s, these tribes were restored by the US federal government with their rights intact. The Klamath tribe of Oregon is the only tribe on the river with a ratified treaty that guaranteed fishing rights. During the termination period, the federal government had built numerous dams and water reclamation projects on the river and given away water resources to farmers and ranchers in the area. Dams such as the Shasta Dam had destroyed many salmon runs, and the water giveaways had taken much-needed in-stream flows out of the river, making the river warmer and less environmentally friendly to fish. When local tribes were restored, they began demanding rights to fish the river again. These rights were decided in a series of court decisions determining that the Klamath tribe's water rights preceded those of farmers and municipalities, meaning that their rights to in-stream flows needed to be upheld. Numerous projects are underway to eliminate the dams on the Klamath River and return it to its original state.

FIGURE 19.14 A Klamath woman in a traditional Klamath canoe harvesting wokas, the seeds of the yellow pond lily, circa 1923. (credit: "The Wokas Season—Klamath" by Edward S. Curtis/Library of Congress, Public Domain)

Tribes with fishing rights in their treaties are now encroaching on the territories of tribes without such rights, leading to legal and political maneuvering between tribes. In Oregon, the Grand Ronde tribe was forced to purchase land at a key fishing location, Willamette Falls, and had to sidestep federal permissions, working with the state to gain "ceremonial" rights. Ultimately, the intertribal conflicts are caused by tribal adherence to federal bureaucratic processes that rely on legal or political channels to resolve problem rather than traditional tribal methods that bring people to the table to form agreements under traditional protocols.

Culture and Language

Native languages are the most threatened part of the cultures of Native peoples. Many tribes now have only a handful of people who fluently speak the tribe's language. Of the estimated 10,000 languages once spoken worldwide, at least half have now gone extinct with no speakers, and there are 3,018 Indigenous languages spoken worldwide that are today endangered. One assessment of the 115 Indigenous languages currently spoken in the United State rates two as healthy, 34 as in danger, and 79 likely to go extinct within a generation (Nagle 2019). The rate and severity of language loss is connected to the remaining population of the tribe, whether the tribe has a functioning cultural center, and whether the language continues to be spoken in the households of tribal members. In large part, tribal people of the United States are becoming English-only speakers (Crawford 1995).

Language recovery and revitalization have become a focus of many Indigenous peoples. Many tribal members consider knowledge of their language to be the true determinant of tribal identity. Complex understandings of philosophies and lifeways are embedded in language. In addition, tribes believe that their ancestors' spirits visit members of the tribe to speak with and advise them, and if a person does not know the language, they will not be able to understand them. Tribes are now working to restore, preserve, stabilize, and teach their languages to the next generations to preserve their knowledge and cultural identities. The University of California, Berkeley, developed a master-apprentice program that is helping many Indigenous groups develop more language speakers by partnering fluent speakers with young tribal members. Even with this type of training, it can take years to learn to fluently speak the language. Another approach is the language immersion program, inspired by Hawaiian and Maori educational models. The immersion model places students in immersive classrooms for a period of several years, in which only the Native language is spoken. Evening classes are also offered for adult learners.

In addition to efforts to restore Native languages, many tribes and urban tribal organizations offer cultural education classes to teach traditional skills. Art and craft classes are quite popular. Classes offered by Native

instructors teach traditional techniques for making bows and arrows, weaving baskets, drawing in traditional styles, beading, and making moccasins, among others. History is another area that is receiving some attention. As just one example, the Cherokee Nation has instituted a history program for tribal members and tribal government staff so that all people working with and for the tribe have a shared understanding of history. Finally, Native events and celebrations typically draw substantial crowds. Many tribes and organizations host events such as powwows and tribal dances annually. These events are free to attend and present many different styles of dance and drum music, along with the opportunity to shop for Native arts and crafts. Powwows are usually multi-tribal events, in part reflecting the origin of these events in intertribal boarding schools.

Tribal cultures and languages are a deep part of Native identity. There was a time in the United States when Native people were heavily exposed to assimilation pressures. During this time, many Native people stopped identifying as Native and did not teach their language or culture to their children or grandchildren. Acceptance of Native peoples has now shifted in most regions of the United States, and Indigenous peoples do not experience as much overt racism as they have in the past, although there are still some areas in the United States—many on the borders of tribal reservations—where overt racism against Indigenous peoples persists (Ashley 2015). Many of the descendants of once reservation-bound tribes are now actively seeking to reassociate themselves with their tribal cultures, recognizing this part of their heritage as a central part of their identity.

Traditional Material Culture

The traditional material cultures of Indigenous peoples showcase an impressive array of styles and skills. Native art was heavily collected by individuals and museums in the 19th century, when there were fears that Indigenous cultures were disappearing. Native art remains popular today. While many Indigenous artists continue to work in traditional styles, some are also incorporating contemporary styles and techniques. Native material cultures embed much cultural philosophy. As anthropologist and museum director Nancy Parezo says, "To anthropologists, Native American/First Nation arts are windows to understanding other cultures and societies. They can be specimens used to support evolutionary theories or explain the maker's cultural concepts of beauty—to show universal concepts and cultural differences, shared meanings, and modes of communication" (1990, 12).

FIGURE 19.15 Klickitat baskets. Traditional techniques and stylistic motifs in Native material culture reveal a great deal about a people's cultural beliefs. (credit: "Image from Page 123 of 'How to Make Indian and Other Baskets' (1903)" by George Wharton James/Internet Archive Book Images/flickr, Public Domain)

Artistic styles such as **petroglyphs**, in which images are carved into stone, and **pictographs**, or drawings, can

be appreciated as both historic and spiritual statements. The petroglyph site in Cascadia Cave, near Sweet Home, Oregon, has hundreds of carvings. The most easily recognizable are the bear paws on the wall of the cave. There are also numerous lines, zigzags, and holes carved out of the cave wall. Willamette Forest Service archaeologist Tony Farque noted that people had long thought that the place was used to gain "bear power" for Native shamans. However, when one steps back, it is apparent that the decorated area of the wall is bordered by a large relief of a salmon, with one hole as its eye and the carved lines creating gills. The cave is now understood as a site where Indigenous peoples—Kalapuya, Molala, and other tribes in the region—sought to gain power when fishing in the nearby South Fork Santiam River, where salmon were known to spawn.

Cultural sites such as Cascadia Cave are in danger of being destroyed by too much attention from archaeologists and the public. For more than a century, Cascadia Cave has been visited by thousands of tourists who have touched the walls, dug in the ground in search of artifacts, taken rubbings of the carvings, and sometimes even carved their initials or painted over petroglyphs to make them stand out more. All these activities degrade the site. Early archaeologists did much the same, digging into the ground and moving many yards of dirt, which has caused rainfall to pool at the walls of the cave. The pooling moisture accelerates the growth of mosses and other plants, which also degrade the walls of the cave. Digging also destroys the archaeological context of the site. It is important to note that in many countries, including the United States, it is illegal to dig up and remove archaeological materials. Those who continue to dig up materials for private collection or for sale are conducting illegal activities. Many of the sites illegally dug are cemetery sites, containing the remains of people and cultural artifacts that are related to descendant tribal populations today.

FIGURE 19.16 Cascadia Cave petroglyphs. Note that the bear paws have been painted to make them more distinct, but this partially destroys the context of the petroglyphs. Additional petroglyphs are all over this portion of the wall. (credit: 46percent/Wikimedia Commons, Public Domain)

Weaving arts are another significant aspect of material culture for many Indigenous peoples. **Basketry** techniques were and still are used to construct vessels used for regular household and resource-gathering activities. Indigenous groups developed various techniques for weaving, such as right twist, left twist, overlay, and false embroidery. These techniques result in decorative styles unique to individual tribes. Weaving techniques make use of many natural materials. Large objects such as mats were typically made with cattail and tule, while baskets could be made from a wide variety of materials, including juncus, hazel branches, cedar bark, bear grass, spruce roots, willow, and maidenhair fern. Some materials were chosen for their stability and durability, others for their flexibility, and still others for their color and luster. Dyeing weaving materials created complex color variations. Baskets were even used for cooking. The technique for boiling water in a basket is similar across many cultures: the basket would be tightly woven, normally with a double weave, and then filled with water. The fibers of the basket and the tight weave created a watertight exterior; additionally, some traditions coated the fibers with grease or pitch. Hot rocks, heated in a fire, would be placed in the basket

to make the contained liquid boil. In this manner, food could be cooked without destroying the basket.

FIGURE 19.17 (left) A Papago/Tohono basket maker working in 1916. (right) Classes teaching traditional basket weaving help to keep the art alive. (credit: left, "Papago Basketmaker at Work, Arizona" by H. T. Cory/National Archives and Records Administration/Wikimedia Commons, Public Domain; right, Jim Heaphy/Wikimedia Commons, Public Domain)

Many tribes now offer classes to teach people the basic techniques and styles particular to their tribal heritage. The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde offer classes in carving, weaving arts, beading, regalia making, drum making, and other arts associated with the 27 tribes that make up the confederation. Arts and crafts are intermixed with education about Native philosophy, spirituality, and language. Some people attend classes for years to master the art style they enjoy, and tribal members may apprentice with master artisans to learn more advanced techniques. Many artisans are creating works of art that are inspired by deep feelings of Native identity, using their art to define themselves and their people within the contexts of both the present and the past. Several artists have become professionals and are producing work for galleries, exhibits, exterior monuments, and contracted sales. The artists employ traditional arts as well as contemporary sculptures and artistic traditions such as painting, drawing, and illustration. Many traditional three-dimensional artworks, such as cedar statues, are now rendered in metal, stone, or even glass so that they are more durable and can survive the rigors of contemporary tourism.

Indigenous Philosophy and Worldviews

A shared element of Indigenous philosophy across various cultures is the conception of humans existing in relationship to the world around them. Native peoples believe they are deeply connected to the natural world; animals are viewed as relatives, and plants, rocks, and mountains are all understood to have **animistic** spirits. Rivers, lakes, and even the seasons themselves are also understood as having spirits. Many Native American peoples believe that animals were once their brothers and sisters. It is believed that from the actions of some of the godlike animals, such as Coyote, Beaver, and Raven, much of the world was made. Many Native peoples gain shamanic powers by forming close relationships with certain animals. These powers might include the ability to heal, to poison, to call salmon, to call weather, to fish, or to communicate with animals. Typically, these abilities are gained through ceremonies designed to familiarize people with their spirit helpers at a young age. Ceremonies differ, but a common format involves a youth going off by themselves into a special natural area—such as a forest, hilltop, or mountain cave—and fasting and meditating until they hear their helper spirit. In this manner, many Native peoples are connected to spiritual powers; the most powerful may become a shaman or spiritual leader of their tribe. Details of these types of ceremonies are kept secret within each tribe. One reason for this secrecy is a concern that non-Native people might attempt the same ceremonies without guidance and perhaps hurt themselves or the world around them in the process.

Native philosophy is understood to be embodied in the elders of the tribes. By living a full life within their particular cultural context, tribal elders gain wisdom about their people and culture. Many maintain tribal languages, too. Elders are honored and supported by younger members of their societies, who in turn learn about tribal traditions and philosophies from the elders. Elders come to their position partly through age, but normally they are recognized by their tribes when they exhibit great wisdom. Certain elders may have greater status than others depending on how well versed they are in their traditions and how respected they are by the

community.

Native philosophy can also be gleaned through the study of oral histories. Many oral histories relate to subjects such as how the world was formed, how humans relate to animals, and how to acquire food, offering moral and ethical lessons. Oral histories may also be records of historic events, such as when the tribe was removed to a reservation, when many people died from disease, when a tsunami forced the people to escape to a mountain, when the land was changed by geological activity, or when there was a war. Oral histories are often full of metaphors and symbols of powerful spiritual forces that caused the event. One example is the story told by the Wasco people of when Coyote and Wishpoosh (Beaver) fought on the Columbia River and created the Columbia Gorge. This oral history reflects Native explanations of a series of flood events that occurred when rushing floodwaters carved out the Columbia Gorge in Oregon. The Missoula floods occurred from 18,000 to 15,000 years ago during the large Ice Age. The floods, perhaps as many as 90 of them, are noted by geologists to have been caused by the breaking of glacial ice dams behind which was Lake Missoula. During fluctuations in the warming period, the ice dams burst, and millions of hectares of water from the glacial lake flooded down the Columbia to carve out the Columbia River Gorge. The dams would refreeze and burst again, perhaps hundreds of times, to scour the lands east of the Columbia of topsoil and carve out the gorge. The topsoil would be deposited in the Willamette Valley (Allen, Burns, and Burns 2009). It is remarkable that Native peoples maintained oral histories documenting this event for at least 15,000 years. The Wasco oral history of Wishpoosh and Coyote is only one such story of this event. All tribes in the region have a story that mentions a flood of this magnitude.

FIGURE 19.18 Columbia River Gorge. A story told by the Wasco people relates how the gorge was created when Coyote and Wishpoosh (Beaver) fought on the Columbia River. (credit: Hux/Wikimedia Commons, Public Domain)

Indigenous worldviews are embedded in ceremonies as well. The Tolowa Nation of Northern California practices Nee-dash, their world renewal ceremony, also called the Feather Dance, on the winter and summer solstices. This ceremony lasts as long as 10 days and is meant to showcase the wealth of the tribe. Dancers, both men and women, wear regalia and dance continuously for the 10 days of the ceremony. Each day, they increase the number of necklaces they wear and the wealth displayed in their regalia. When the dancers become "wealthier," it is a metaphor for the growth of food, understood as the wealth of the land, that begins in the spring of each year. Dancers move in a semicircle, men on one side and women on the other, as a leader sings Native ceremonial songs and stamps out a beat on the hard-packed earthen floor with a tall stamper stick. Dancers take turns "coming out" and dancing, individually or in twos, threes, or larger groups, understood to be displaying their ceremonial power in hunting, fishing, or gathering. An audience of tribal people is normally situated around the benches of the dance house, men on one side and women on the other. The dances are meant to renew the earth to ensure strong returns of seasonal fish runs, good hunting opportunities, and rich yields of acorns or berries. The ceremony honors the land, the animals, and the plants

that sustain the people. This ceremony establishes a spiritual relationship in which people are not separate from nature but a part of it, with the responsibility to act as stewards of its great wealth.

FIGURE 19.19 Tolowa Dee'ni Feather Dancers perform during a ceremony at the University of Oregon in 2001. The Feather Dance is understood to affirm a spiritual relationship between people and nature, with humans acknowledging the responsibility to act as stewards of its great wealth. (credit: David G. Lewis, Public Domain)

Most Indigenous cultures have ceremonies similar to this, centered on events such as the first salmon catch, the first hunt, or the first gathering of any important food. First salmon ceremonies for the Takelma peoples of the Rogue River Valley in Oregon involve a young man taking the bones of the first salmon caught that year down to the bottom of the Rogue River. These ceremonies are an important way for Native peoples to acknowledge and recommit themselves to a responsibility to steward the natural world in order to sustain its health and vibrancy so that the people who rely on it may thrive into the future.

Indigenous Critique: Rights, Activism, Appropriation, and Stereotypes

In the contemporary era, the publications of academics have had a great deal of influence on how tribes have been treated by the federal government and other groups. A 1997 essay, titled "Anthropology and the Making of Chumash Tradition," included the authors' opinion that the Coast Chumash tribe were descendants of Mexican people, and not Native people of North America at all (Haley and Wilcoxon 1997). The essay relied in part on rumors that were later refuted as unproven by archaeologist Jon Erlandson (1998). These claims, even disproven, aided other Native peoples in accusing the Coast Chumash of not being Native, resulting in many social and political problems for the community. Scholarly publications such as these can affect the ability of tribal nations in the United States to gain federal recognition status because all applicants for federal recognition must establish continuous culture and governance. Public and scholarly opinions can have a huge effect on whether tribes get recognized and are able to restore their culture and sovereignty after centuries of colonization.

Responses to the disempowering effects of colonialism have sometimes been overtly political. In the 1960s, the **American Indian Movement** (AIM) took actions to bolster tribal sovereignty throughout the United States. AIM was involved with several highly public activities, including an occupation at Mount Rushmore in 1971 in protest over the illegal taking of Sioux lands and the carving of presidents' faces in a mountain sacred to the Sioux. AIM also participated in the occupation of Wounded Knee in 1973, the site of a historic battleground, in protest over the failure to impeach Oglala Sioux president Richard Wilson; the resulting standoff with federal law enforcement lasted 71 days. Public awareness of the federal government's oppression of Native peoples grew when a large military force was deployed during a second occupation of Wounded Knee, an event called Wounded Knee 2. AIM's work was part of a larger civil rights movement that involved Black, Latina/Latino, and women activists as well as the growing anti–Vietnam War movement. This larger movement created political shifts in the United States that benefited Native communities (Johansen 2013).

FIGURE 19.20 The Trail of Broken Treaties Protest of 1972, part of the American Indian Movement for greater political rights and tribal sovereignty. (credit: "TrailBroken.AIM.WDC.12oct02" by Elvert Barnes Protest Photography/flickr, CC BY 2.0)

Beginning in the 1970s, several laws were passed by Congress to empower tribes. These included policies pertaining to education (Indian Education Act, 1972), child foster care (Indian Child Welfare Act, 1978), college education (Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities Assistance Act, 1978), freedom of religion (American Indian Religious Freedom Act, 1978), and rights to archaeological sites and remains (Archaeological Resources Protection Act, 1979, and Native American Graves and Repatriation Act, 1990). This period also saw the end of the national policy of termination and a turn toward allowing tribes that had been terminated to be restored, with self-determination becoming standard federal policy.

Stereotypes

Native peoples have also become vocal in confronting stereotypes about them. The first Western stereotypes of Native peoples in North American depicted them in primitivist terms as **noble savages**, living in harmony with nature, with no notions of laws, time, or money. Implicit in this view was the idea that Indigenous peoples were not fully civilized and did not deserve the same rights as White, Christian people. Their land could thus be taken away. This stereotype has been described by writer Albert Memmi "as a series of negations: they were not fully human, they were not civilized enough to have systems, they were not literate, their languages and modes of thought were inadequate" (Smith 2021, 31). Throughout the history of the United States, these stereotypes have been used to progressively take more and more away from Native peoples. When reservations were first established, they were said to be permanent homes, but as White settlers began to see these lands as attractive places, the notion was again raised that Native peoples were not using the land appropriately.

FIGURE 19.21 Chief Joseph of the Nez Percé tribe (Niimiipuu), pictured with a stoic "noble savage" look. The stereotype of Indigenous people as "noble savages" has been used as justification for taking their land away from them. (credit: "Joseph—Nez Percé" by Edward S. Curtis/Library of Congress, Public Domain)

Additional stereotypes originated with early anthropological research. Notions that Native peoples could not digest alcohol, were lazy and would not work, were not intelligent enough to become civilized, or were dying off as a population because they did not have a civilized culture have all been perpetuated by scholars who embraced social evolutionary theories about human societies. The idea that societies and civilizations existed in competition with one another, and that Native peoples were not competitive because they were savages or barbarians, was inspired by Lewis Henry Morgan's proposal of a hierarchy of civilizations. These ideas have been heavily refuted, but the stereotypes persist and continue to affect Native peoples in prejudicial ways.

Recently, the issue of **Indian mascots** has received a lot of attention. In the early 20th century, private and professional sports teams and franchises begin to name their athletic teams after Native groups or some characteristic words referring to Native peoples. Common names include the Warriors, Chiefs, Indians, Reds, Redskins, and Braves. Some of these names may have been chosen to honor the strength and resilience of people who had survived centuries of war with colonizing peoples. Regardless of the original intention, as time went on, fans of many of these teams developed practices that disparaged Indigenous peoples. Many mascots were cartoonish or savage caricatures. These mascots may have been the only exposure many American people had to Native peoples, at a time when there was no valid education about Native peoples offered in public schools.

The first significant challenge to the use of such mascots was led by Charlene Teters, a student at the University of Illinois, against the university's mascot, Chief Illiniwek, in the 1980s. Teters criticized various aspects of the chief's presentation, including the headdress, regalia, and dance style, the latter of which was the invention of students who took the role of mascot each year. The campaign against this mascot continued for some 20 years, with many fans and alumni of the university countering that the mascot was meant to honor the Illiniwek people. The mascot was finally dropped by the university in 2007.

Much opposition to mascots is connected not to the use of the figure itself but to the behavior of fans. Practices such as dressing in red paint, wearing outfits of fake feathers and fake headdresses, and using arm motions such as the "tomahawk chop" to show team spirit have offended Native groups. Names might also carry

meanings not fully understood by fans. Controversy around the Washington Redskins' name and mascot lasted for some 30 years. Many fans weren't aware that the term *redskins* was used in states such as California and Oregon to refer to Native scalps collected by White American militia members. These scalps, or redskins, could be returned to the state government for a bounty. At certain periods in U.S. history, hundreds of Native people were killed, and whole villages sometimes destroyed, by militia seeking redskins to collect these bounties. In 2020, the Washington Redskins dropped the name, becoming known as the Washington Football Team until a replacement name was chosen. Similarly, in 2019, the Cleveland Indians dopped its "Chief Wahoo" mascot, and in 2021, the team changed its name to the Cleveland Guardians.

In some cases, tribal nations have collaborated with universities to develop more respectful mascot images. The University of Utah has collaborated with the Ute tribe in designing its mascot image featuring a feather, and Florida State University has worked with the Seminole tribe to develop its Appaloosa horse rider and spear imagery. There remains a political divide in the debate about mascots, with some Native activists believing there should be no Indian mascots, while others think that sovereign tribal nations, as sovereign governments, should be able to decide how their people are characterized by organized athletic organizations.

19.4 Applied and Public Anthropology and Indigenous Peoples

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Explain how tribal cultures are using anthropology to secure rights to sites of cultural significance.
- Describe how anthropologists and Native scholars aid Indigenous peoples using anthropology.
- Discuss how Indigenous peoples create networks to help one another.

Applied anthropology, which applies anthropological research and methods to contemporary problems, addresses much of the critique of anthropology offered by Vine Deloria Jr. and others. Many Indigenous peoples have become active participants in applied anthropological research, both seeking out and collaborating with anthropologists to work on projects that they themselves have defined. Many tribes now take a directive approach with researchers, offering contracts and funding for anthropologists who will work on issues that the tribes think are important. As tribes develop their reservation infrastructure, many have established archaeology programs to protect their rights to sites of importance. Many have asked scientists to create GIS (geographic information system) products, which feature layers depicting various resources and characteristics on a map, to manage their lands and help them effectively consult with states, the federal government, and private agencies. The layering of information in the GIS can create deeply immersive maps and models that include information about types of vegetation, the environmental history of lands, changes to lands, and any other information than can be captured and mapped. Layered information can be activated or removed from a map to meet specific aims. Tribes can now reference both the information available through scholarly studies and information about their lands and peoples from their own internal studies, which they do not typically share outside of the tribe. In many ways, tribes are now more knowledgeable about the archaeology of their territory than most institutions and are making plans to protect and preserve cultural sites and resources.

Public anthropologists aim to engage with communities and involve the general public in their work as much as possible. In doing so, they empower communities to address their own problems. Many public anthropologists publish their research in readily accessible formats, such as newspapers and popular magazines. The Internet offers many ways for public anthropologists to reach a broader audience. Blogs and digital journals make it possible for anthropologists to make information broadly available in order to benefit the greatest number of people.

The author of this chapter, David Lewis, describes his own efforts to make anthropological research more readily available:

I produce a blog, the Quartux Journal (https://openstax.org/r/QuartuxJournal), which I began in 2014. At that time, I was engaged in a decade-long series of studies of the tribal peoples of western Oregon. Years of research had given me much to write about. The blog offered a means of releasing that information quickly and without charge to a broad group of colleagues and the public who desired information about Native peoples. Many of

my readers are educators seeking content for high school or college classes they are teaching about Native peoples. This blog began at a time when Native groups and the state of Oregon were developing Native curricula for public schools, and it has become an essential curriculum tool for educators in the region. Educators have written back about the lack of resources and the great aid the blog has offered in filling their need for facts about the tribes of Oregon. The blog has now grown to more than 450 essays about tribal peoples throughout western Oregon and beyond. Its essays are easily read in about 10 minutes and are not jargon laden. There are currently more than 1,000 subscribers to this blog. The essays have inspired additional research on Native peoples' history and has lent Native contextual details to local studies of the histories of Oregon.

MINI-FIELDWORK ACTIVITY

Research Activity: Native American Peoples

Conduct research into Edward S. Curtis's photographs of Native North American peoples. The majority of his images are online in the Library of Congress Edward S. Curtis Collection (https://openstax.org/r/LibraryofCongress).

After picking at least one image, research the circumstances under which Curtis took the photograph. Curtis himself offers clues to his subject and location, sometimes even identifying his subjects by name. Then, research the tribe the subject(s) was or were a part of, including where the tribe was living at the time the photo was taken and their socioeconomic situation. Expect to conduct research to locate the correct historic sources. Finally, compare the culture portrayed in the photo and noted by Curtis's information with your research findings. Note differences and ways in which Curtis may have altered the context.

One reference for research is the video *Edward Curtis: Photographing the North American Indian* (https://openstax.org/r/EdwardCurtis), available from the Smithsonian Institution.

Present your research in a formal report of 3–5 pages, including full references and the image being researched.

Suggested Readings

Biolsi, Thomas, and Larry J. Zimmerman, eds. 1997. *Indians and Anthropologists: Vine Deloria, Jr., and the Critique of Anthropology*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.

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Key Terms

American Indian Movement a social and political organization with many local chapters around the United States of activist Native people focused on confronting the federal and state governments over racist policies and actions. AIM was most active in the 1970s and 1980s.

animistic of or relating to a spiritual belief that everything in the world has its own living spirit.

assimilation the process of changing the culture of a person or group of people to some other culture, through socialization or education.

basketry an art form of many Indigenous peoples, created from woven plant matter. Each tribe has its own traditions and styles, with some tribes using many styles.

blood quantum a term first applied by the US federal government to determine which people had rights to services and land at reservations. The term has become a characteristic to define who is eligible for citizenship in a tribe, with membership open only to those who have a minimum blood quantum of Indigenous genealogical ancestry.

boarding schools educational institutions established by federal authorities to efficiently educate and assimilate Indigenous children through an immersive environment.

Indian Claims a series of more than 700 lawsuits brought by tribal nations in the 20th century against the US federal government to demand repayment for failures in the administration of a variety of responsibilities.

Indian mascots characterizations of a Native person or group used to represent athletic teams, often portraying savage or cartoonish stereotypes. The practice is considered highly racist toward Native peoples.

Indians a commonly used term for Native Americans first applied by Christopher Columbus, who mistakenly thought the Indigenous peoples he encountered were people of India.

Indigenous peoples the original populations of a land and those who carry culture and experiences from an Indigenous culture. Indigenous peoples may also be referred to as Native peoples, tribal peoples, tribes, First Nations peoples, Aboriginal peoples, or American Indians or Native Americans.

Maori the Indigenous peoples of New Zealand.

Marshall court trilogy three Supreme Court decisions—*Johnson v. M'Intosh* (1823), *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia* (1831), and *Worcester v. Georgia* (1832)—that determined that tribal nations are domestic sovereign nations within the United States and dependent on the federal government to guarantee their sovereignty.

mestizo Latin American term for a person of mixed heritage, normally Indigenous and Spanish or Indigenous and another White ethnicity.

Métis Canadian term for a person of partial Indigenous heritage. A Métis person has different rights from a First Nations person.

Native studies an educational discipline that originated from the critiques of studies of tribal communities by non-Native scholars. Native studies programs seek to center Indigenous knowledge and experience in studies of Indigenous peoples and societies.

noble savages a romanticist term used to suggest that Native peoples were uncivilized and primitive, living in harmony with nature.

oral histories spoken, rather than written, narratives of past events.

oral tradition cultural knowledge that is passed on through oral, rather than written, form.

petroglyphs images carved into stone and sometimes painted.

pictographs drawings on the wall of a cave or rock shelter or on animal hide.

public anthropologists anthropologists who work to make their research, analysis, and products available to the public through publication and presentation of their work in public, easily accessible places.

reservations lands given to Indigenous tribes as supposedly permanent places for their communities to live and practice their culture, usually through treaty or executive order.

termination a US federal policy adopted in 1953 that involved voiding the treaty agreements between the federal government and Native peoples, enabling the government to repossess and sell property that had been part of reservations in a process called liquidation. Terminated tribal peoples are no longer federally recognized Native peoples and have no rights to ask for federal services or assistance. Between 1954 and the 1970s, 109 tribes underwent termination. Most were federally restored between the 1970s and the 1990s.

Trade and Intercourse Acts federal laws that administer trade between states and across federal borders. The law affects the ability of

Native nations to establish industries and sell products or services beyond their borders.

treaties agreements between sovereign entities, in this context Native nations and the United States.

urban Indian a Native person who lives in an urban environment; sometimes a negative title used by those living on reservations to refer to Native people who are assumed to have willingly given up their culture, land, and Native identities.

Summary

This chapter addresses many issues involving Native peoples that are a result of the colonization of Indigenous peoples, the effects of a long history of governmental administration, and the manipulation of Native history and cultures in public spheres. Indigenous peoples in the United States today have lived through a long period of cultural collapse and are subject to extreme competition for land, rights, and resources. This chapter focuses primarily on the Indigenous peoples of Oregon within the United States. The issues faced by these people are similar to those faced by Indigenous peoples around the world, including a history of colonization, removal from traditional lands to reservations, signing away land and rights in treaties, and forced education in boarding schools. Disempowerment of tribal sovereignty, disenfranchisement from lands and resources, and forced assimilation have significantly affected Native peoples.

In addition, Indigenous peoples of the United States face significant problems adjusting to contemporary society. The general lack of education about Indigenous peoples has caused a lack of knowledge about Native history and culture in society. Within this culture, mascots and stereotypes are challenging to Native peoples, who face racism in society. Contemporary tribal nations struggle to restore cultures and governance systems. Native peoples must adjust to the cross-culturalism of modern society while they seek to maintain tribal identities and memberships in tribal nations. Scholarly studies of Native peoples are also addressed, as the studies and perceptions of anthropologists have significantly affected how tribes are perceived today.

Critical Thinking Questions

1. How would you characterize the impact of colonialism on Indigenous peoples?
2. Considering this chapter and overlapping subjects in previous chapters, what changes have been made within the discipline of anthropology in the 20th and 21st centuries?
3. What role have casinos played in tribal economic development?
4. How have Indigenous critiques and Indigenous perspectives changed and developed anthropology?
5. Should Native American human remains and funerary objects be collected for scientific research or returned to tribes? Explain your answer.
6. Why are language recovery and language reclamation important to maintain Indigenous cultures? Explain your answer using details from the text.
7. Address Indian mascots or stereotypes you have encountered in your experience. In what ways might they be viewed as dishonoring Native peoples?
8. What roles are tribal communities taking with regard to applied anthropology?

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CHAPTER 20
Anthropology on the Ground

Figure 20.1 The Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada, showcases anthropological artifacts and culturally diverse histories. (credit: "UBC Museum of Anthropology" by Wpcpey/ Wikimedia Commons, CC BY 4.0)

CHAPTER OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION In "Waddling In," a provocative essay published in 1985, interpretive anthropologist Clifford Geertz proposed that among the various academic disciplines, anthropology was uniquely capable of leading into the future. He pointed out the fundamental changes anthropology faced as it headed into the 21st century—changes in its traditional subject focus, its traditional field sites, and its wide, holistic perspective, which Geertz referred to as "walking barefoot through the Whole of Culture" (1985, 623):

> Pulled in opposed directions by technical advances in allied disciplines, divided within itself along accidental ill-drawn lines, besieged from one side by resurgent scientism and from the other by an advanced form of hand-wringing, and progressively deprived of its original subject matter, its research isolation, and its master-of-all-I-survey authority, [anthropology] seems not only to stay reasonably intact but . . . to extend the sway of the cast of mind that defines it over wider and wider areas of contemporary thought. We have turned out to be rather good at waddling in. In our confusion is our strength. (624)

In our confusion is our strength. For Geertz, this *confusion* reflects anthropology's flexibility as a science and a

humanity and its acknowledgment that we do not yet know everything about who we are as a species. Our ongoing mission is to be open to what comes next, open to the potential of what it means to be human. This is especially important at this moment in history when global challenges remind us of how much remains to be done for every person to have a life of dignity. Instead of predicting the end of anthropology, "Waddling In" challenges anthropologists to discover an ever-widening relevance and importance for the discipline, in a world of ongoing cultural change.

Anthropology is both an academic and an applied discipline. What anthropology reveals about human culture and human biology can be used to improve lives today. Anthropology is deeply relevant to contemporary lives in many ways. Museums are a common way in which anthropological knowledge is presented to the public, interpreting cultural and biological diversity and inspiring new generations of scholars and a broader public. The Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia, shown in Figure 20.1, is an example of one way anthropologists share their knowledge in a public space. But there are many other ways in which anthropologists interact with and influence our global community.

20.1 Our Challenging World Today

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Identify some of the most critical global challenges.
- Define ethnosphere.
- Analyze the importance of the ethnosphere today.

Critical Global Challenges

Today humanity faces a growing number of global problems, most of them linked to one another and to long-standing historical inequities and injustice. Many of the problems people experience in their daily lives derive from major global issues, which intersect with and affect cultural traditions and contemporary social behaviors. In other words, our global problems are deeply connected to the ways we live locally. Local and global problems connect and reinforce each other.

FIGURE 20.2 The United Nations headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland. In 2021, the United Nations identified 22 critical global issues humanity currently faces. (credit: "Palais des Nations Unies, à Genève" by Groov3/Wikimedia Commons, CC0)

In 2021, the United Nations (UN) identified 22 critical global issues, several worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic. These are challenges that "transcend national boundaries and cannot be resolved by any one

country acting alone" (United Nations 2021). Many of these challenges, which affect all nations, are particularly harmful to those facing discrimination, environmental and social racism, and economic poverty. As you read through these "global issues," notice how many of these challenges are linked together (e.g., Africa, decolonization, democracy, poverty, global health, etc.). Go through this list and note which of these impact you and which might have affected your ancestors. Consider such things as cost of goods and services, possible effects on health and welfare, and even the political instability that might result from these issues, creating global ripple effects. Also, consider how populations suffering various injustices might experience greater impacts than those in otherwise stable communities.

- *Africa*: promoting democratic institutions, supporting economic and social development, and protecting human rights.
- *Aging*: responding to the growth of aging populations (ages 60 and over) worldwide.
- *AIDS*: continuing to reduce infection and death rates in the global fight against AIDS.
- *Atomic energy*: promoting the safe, secure, and peaceful operation of more than 440 nuclear reactors generating electricity worldwide.
- *Big data for sustainable development*: monitoring inclusiveness and fairness in the application of new data sources, technologies, and analyses.
- *Children*: protecting the rights of every child to health, education, and protection and expanding children's opportunities.
- *Climate change*: responding to the unprecedented challenges of shifting weather patterns that threaten food production and create climate emergencies.
- *Decolonization*: continuing to monitor and encourage self-determination among former colonies, which the UN refers to as a "sacred trust." When the UN was founded in 1945, approximately 750 million people were living in colonies and dependencies; today, fewer than two million live under colonial rule.
- *Democracy*: strengthening democracy, "a universally recognized ideal" and a core value of the UN, as a way of strengthening human rights.
- *Ending poverty*: reducing global poverty rates, which could increase by as much as 8 percent of the world's population during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- *Food*: working toward food security and increasing nutrition for the most vulnerable population groups, especially during COVID-19.
- *Gender equality*: promoting gender equality as both a fundamental human right and a critical factor in achieving peaceful and sustainable societies.
- *Health*: monitoring, promoting, and protecting health concerns worldwide. Much of the leadership in this area is provided by the World Health Organization (WHO).
- *Human rights*: continuing the ongoing effort to guarantee human rights around the globe. This is a central focus of the UN's work, as set out in the UN Charter (https://openstax.org/r/un-charter) and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (https://openstax.org/r/universal-declaration-of-human-rights).
- *International law and justice*: continuing to promote international law and justice across the three pillars of international peace and security, socioeconomic development and progress, and respect for fundamental human rights and freedoms.
- *Migration*: ensuring the orderly and humane management of migration, finding practical solutions to migration problems, and providing humanitarian assistance to refugees and internally displaced persons.
- *Oceans and the law of the sea*: ensuring peaceful, cooperative usage of the oceans and seas to the common benefit for humanity and combating the rising threat of pollution and waste from transport vessels and oil tankers.
- *Peace and security*: helping restore peace and preventing disputes from escalating into war.
- *Population*: promoting sexual and reproductive health and individuals' ability to manage the size of their families.
- *Refugees*: providing aid and safe haven to the millions of people forcibly displaced worldwide. In 2019, an estimated 79.5 million people were refugees, 26 million of them under the age of 18.
- *Water*: managing the competition between individual and commercial needs for access to water, which is critical for all human populations.
- *Youth*: providing for a more just, equitable, and progressive future for persons between the ages of 15 and 24, including ensuring access to health, education, and employment and working toward gender equality.

Private philanthropists have been working on some of these same problems as well. In 2020, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, founded in 2000 to work collaboratively with governments to solve critical global health issues, expanded their focus by naming three major action areas for their multibillion-dollar foundation, in addition to ongoing educational priorities:

- *Climate change*: increasing clean energy, providing zero-emissions energy to low-income countries, and developing innovative approaches to food production.
- *Gender inequality and gender-based violence*: expanding access to education to improve women's lives and increasing women's leadership positions in government, finance, and health.
- *Global health*: sponsoring initiatives to deliver vaccinations and otherwise combat major global diseases, such as AIDS and malaria. (Bass and Bloomberg 2020)

These lists represent only the beginning of the challenges that face us as human beings living on one shared planet. Underpinning these challenges are many others, none more important than the loss of diversities. We face devastating losses in three major areas of diversity: *biological diversity*, as species are increasingly endangered or become extinct; *cultural diversity*, as Indigenous peoples, minorities, and smaller populations in more isolated areas, such as rural areas, face encroachments on their lands and their lives, including their right to exist as diverse cultures; and *linguistic diversity*, with thousands of languages already extinct and many more facing imminent extinction. As diversity declines, our species has fewer options and less flexibility. When we consider that most innovation builds on preexisting forms—whether of biology, culture, or language—the loss of anything that once existed is also a loss of potential, of *what could have been*.

But all is not doom and gloom. Hope is offered by disciplines, such as anthropology, that work to value and preserve diversities. Anthropology has taken a lead role in bringing positive change to our global world. Projects in which anthropological knowledge and insight is applied to current challenges include language reclamation and revitalization, primate conservation and habitat enrichment, revitalization of traditional foodways and technologies, and other projects to revive, restore, and encourage cultural, biological, and linguistic diversity.

The Ethnosphere

When considering the many challenges facing us as a global community, we must also acknowledge our **assets**—the tools and conditions we can harness to increase value and effect positive change. We do not enter our future empty-handed. To some extent, our challenges and assets have evolved together, hand in hand. As we face concerns about another possible global health pandemic, for example, we bring with us a depth of scientific knowledge based on earlier experiences, having learned and retooled our responses to be better prepared for those things we have experienced before. As we begin to combat overwhelming climate crises after decades of abusing our environment, we have knowledge and tools to make positive changes while continuing to educate people about our physical world, pollution, and global warming. We understand the causes of most of our challenges, and we have the ability to harness large groups of people globally to work together to address them, with an impressive array of technology at our fingertips. We are not a helpless species. We are not necessarily smarter or wiser than our ancestors were, but we do have one great treasure—we have what our ancestors left to us. We have the accumulation of all their cultural wisdom, ingenuity, and humanity.

In 2001, Canadian cultural anthropologist Wade Davis coined the term **ethnosphere** to refer to the sum total of all of human knowledge across time:

> You might think of the ethnosphere as being the sum total of all thoughts and dreams, myths, intuitions and inspirations brought into being by the human imagination since the dawn of consciousness. The ethnosphere is humanity's great legacy. It is the product of our dreams, the embodiment of our hopes, the symbol of all that we are and all that we have created as a wildly inquisitive and astonishingly adaptive species. (Davis 2003)

FIGURE 20.3 Anthropologist Wade Davis coined the term *ethnosphere* to describe the totality of the human cultural legacy across time and cultures. (credit: "Wade Davis" by Cpt. Muji/Wikimedia Commons, CC0)

The diverse ways in which humans have solved or managed the challenges of our lives, many of them challenges that we have inflicted on ourselves because of greed and ignorance, is a rich storehouse for our future. Too often, contemporary people feel there is little to learn from those who are different from us or who came before us, but the solutions to our current problems are founded upon this legacy.

Humans have faced grave environmental challenges more than once in our species' history. Our ancestors also faced global climate challenges. The last glacial period occurred between 120,000 and 11,500 years ago. During that time, alternating periods of global cooling and warming displaced human populations and forced them to adapt to new plants and animals as they migrated and ultimately peopled the globe. One of the notable consequences of the last years of the glacial period was the extinction of some 177 species of megafauna (large mammals), including woolly mammoths, giant deer, and saber-toothed cats. There have been two primary theories about these extinctions, which occurred worldwide (in Europe, Africa, Asia, and North and South America). Did the animals go extinct due to climate change and habitat loss or to overkilling by human big-game hunters? Recently, researchers at Aarhus University in Denmark studied the extinction of megafauna species through global mapping techniques that compared timelines of human occupation and of animal extinction (Sandom et al. 2014). In about one-third of the animal extinctions, the correlation of the dates of the earliest arrival of human hunters and the extinction of the animals was clear and consistent. While the majority of cases were not consistent, they did not present contrary evidence to the theory of human overkill and environmental exploitation. It appears that humans were involved in mass extinctions and environmental changes even in these early periods.

FIGURE 20.4 The skeleton of a woolly mammoth, a large mammal that was most likely hunted to extinction by early humans. (credit: "Siegsdorfer Mammut" by Lou Gruber/Wikimedia Commons, Public Domain)

And yet people have also been involved in animal reintroductions and species conservation. Today, U.S. National Parks have reported a variety of species reintroduction success stories. In several national parks across the United States, native animal species have been reintroduced to better manage habitats, conserve endangered species, and support a healthy ecosystem. Among the most successful reintroduced species are California condors, Pacific fishers, black-footed ferrets, gray wolves, bald eagles, desert pupfish, bighorn sheep, elk, and nēnē, a species of goose native to Hawaii (Errick 2015).

Entomologist Edward O. Wilson has devoted his life to studying and working to protect **biodiversity**, the astounding variety of plants and animals on our planet that together form a healthy ecosystem. As part of the biological web of life, humans are important actors. Within the ethnosphere lies the wisdom of generations of human interactions with other species for food, medicines, clothing, shelter, protection, companionship, and economic exploitation. Many of the tools related to this valuable knowledge are found within Indigenous cultures, too many of them also endangered or extinct today. By preserving and valuing the ethnosphere and its diversity, we preserve ourselves, our children's futures, and the hopes we have for our planet.

Anthropology plays a major role in preserving, valuing, and teaching about the ethnosphere. In this critical role, anthropology makes an important difference in how well we encounter the future—whether we will adapt and thrive or face ever-increasing threats to our survival. Whether you are a practicing anthropologist, a student of anthropology, or someone who enjoys learning about our diverse world, including its diverse peoples and cultures, you have a role to play in bringing about a more hopeful future.

20.2 Why Anthropology Matters

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Explain the characteristics of anthropology that make it uniquely relevant today.
- Describe and give an example of anthropological values.
- Analyze the importance of anthropological skills.

A Uniquely Relevant Discipline

As you learned in What is Anthropology?, anthropology is a unique discipline. Not only does it study all aspects of what it means to be human across time, with a focus on evolution and how changes occur in our bodies and cultures, but it also examines the ways in which we adapt to different social and physical environments. This process of adaptation is a primary source of cultural and biological diversity. Anthropology is also holistic,

examining the context of and interconnections between many parts of our lives and weaving together our biology, our traditions, and the diverse social and physical environments in which we live. The anthropological approach views humans as part of a wider system of meaning, as actors and change-makers within a dynamic environment populated by others. Across cultures, those others can include other species (plant and animal) and spirits as well as other human beings. It is the human ability to imagine and construct the universe in which we live that most interests anthropologists.

In most four-field introductory classes, students are surprised at the breadth of anthropology, but this wide lens is the cornerstone of the discipline. Today, anthropologists increasingly approach the study of humans as a dynamic construct. We see humans as agents in motion, undergoing change as a normal state of being, rather than as objects in a petri dish, preserved and inert. This means that anthropological studies are by necessity messy and in flux, as our subject matter makes change. Because holism, adaptation, and adjustment are critical to anthropological studies, we bring an especially powerful lens to attempts to understand complex, large-scale global problems.

Few of our challenges today are simple. Solving the climate crisis requires changes not just to our use of fossil fuels but also to the ways in which we produce food, bathe, heat and cool our houses, and travel. Each culture and each community must be aware of its power and potential to enact positive change. Both a scientific and a humanistic approach are needed to solve our current global challenges.

Anthropological Values

The anthropological perspective is grounded by principles and standards of behavior considered important to understanding other people and their ways of life. These include the value of all cultures; the value of diversities, biological and cultural; the importance of change over time; and the importance of cultural relativism and acknowledging of the dignity of all human beings. These anthropological **values** undergird our discipline.

The study of culture intersects with each of the four subfields and highlights the importance of diversity. From the beginning, humans have used ingenuity to tackle problems and provide solutions to challenging circumstances. Anthropologists study and value this extraordinary process of human creativity, documenting it in living and past cultures, in our languages and symbol systems, and even in our bones, through cultural procedures such as elongating women's necks (as is practiced by the Kayan people of Myanmar) or flattening/elongating people's heads (practiced by the Chinookan peoples of North America). Even our diets, which are cultural artifacts of adaptation, are written on our bones. The consumption of corn, for example, is measurable as carbon isotopes in human bone. Anthropology celebrates this human uniqueness and diversity, understanding that different ways of being are humanity's greatest legacy—a foundation embodied in the concept of the ethnosphere.

FIGURE 20.5 Kayan women use neck rings from an early age to make their necks appear longer. The rings actually push down the clavicle and compress the rib cage. This is a sign of beauty among the Kayan. (credit: "IMG_0547" by Brian Jeffery Beggerly/flickr, CC BY 2.0)

Anthropological studies produce documentation of immeasurable worth. Through anthropological research, we collect, preserve, and share the stories of living humans as well as human artifacts, sites, and bodies. Together, these documents form a valuable database. Field notes and artifacts from the earliest anthropologists document diversity that has since disappeared. Franz Boas taught his students how to make life masks of the people they were studying to document the physical diversity of different groups of people (A. Singer 1986). This vast collection of some 2,000 life masks is now preserved at the Smithsonian Institution as an archival resource for understanding environment, culture, and biological adaptations. Many masks document ethnic groups that are now extinct. Anthropology collections (https://openstax.org/r/naturalhistory) are of inestimable value for future research.

The Council for the Preservation of Anthropological Records, or CoPAR (https://openstax.org/r/copar.umd), works with anthropologists, librarians, and archivists to obtain and preserve anthropological records and make them available both for the study of human diversity and as a record of the history of the discipline. The organization has two primary goals. The first is to educate anthropologists on the value and urgency of saving documents. The second is to help train archivists and information specialists in best practices for handling the sometimes very sensitive information within these documents while also facilitating them in making sure that the information is available to scholars anywhere (Silverman and Parezo 1995).

Diversity is a product of adaptation and change over time. As cultural groups encountered different challenges in their environments, they used ingenuity and innovation to address these challenges, sometimes borrowing other cultures' solutions when applicable. In the high Andes of South America, the steep mountainous inclines mean that there is little flat ground for growing food. In response to this challenge, Inca farmers used terrace farming, building steplike terraces into the hillside to create areas of flatter surfaces for growing crops (see Figure 20.6). Forms of terrace farming are found all over Asia and in parts of Africa, with cultures in each area adapting the use of terraces to meet specific climatic conditions and crop requirements (e.g., paddy rice cultivation requires small earthwork borders to allow for flooding). In short, there is no one way to do something; every solution is calibrated to particular needs. Today, with increasing urgency to minimize our

carbon footprints, architects are designing homes to meet clients' demands for net-positive houses—that is, houses that produce more energy than they consume through solar power and lower-energy appliances (Stamp 2020). As we work toward reducing our dependence on fossil fuels, the architectural and construction industries are beginning to adapt to these changing needs and demands.

FIGURE 20.6 Adaptations: (left) By cutting these steplike terraces into the mountain, Andean farmers created more arable land for farming. (right) In this net-positive house in Australia, the solar panels, increased insulation, and lower-energy appliances all contribute to a "net zero" energy design. (credit: (left) "Peru Terrace Farming" by J. Thompson/Wikimedia Commons, Public Domain; (right) "The Zero-Emission House" by Keirissa Lawson, CSIRO/ Wikimedia Commons, CC BY 3.0)

Besides culture and diversity, anthropology is also about the human power to change. Through adaption, evolution, and even acclimatization (short-term adaptation to environmental change), the human body has evolved alongside human cultures to make us a species uniquely capable of adapting to almost any environmental or social conditions. Humans can survive even in such inhospitable environments as outer space (thanks to the human-designed technology that makes up the International Space Station) and the polar regions (where human-built structures and protective gear make habitation possible at McMurdo Station in Antarctica). And humans have survived health crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic and historical tragedies such as slavery and warfare. The ability to change, redirect, reassess, reimagine, and innovate has sustained our species across time.

Diversity matters more today than ever. Where diversity is valued, there is greater potential for innovation and collaboration. A central value of anthropology, evident in both research and applied work across communities, is anthropologists' focus not only on understanding other cultures and different ways of living but also on *translating* them—that is, communicating what is learned across cultures in order to share it more broadly.

The most important anthropological value, however, is cultural relativism, or suspending judgment about other cultures until one gains a clear understanding of the meaning and significance of what those cultures do and believe. Cultural relativism requires us to understand the rationale, purpose, and meaning of cultural traditions and knowledge before we decide on their validity. And it provides significant advantages in better understanding others:

- It allows us to see the worth, dignity, and respect of all persons, allowing for initial exchange and collaboration between "us" and "them."
- It reminds us to approach the study of other cultures without automatically judging them as inferior, thus minimizing ethnocentrism.
- It helps us keep an open mind about the potentials and possibilities inherent in our species.

First formally introduced by Franz Boas, cultural relativism laid the groundwork for the discipline of anthropology, a science that would study what it means to be human in all its diverse forms. Boas and his students worked to apply cultural relativism across racial, ethnic, linguistic, and socioeconomic boundaries, documenting the rich cultural traditions of Indigenous peoples, minority communities, and immigrants. The concept, though, has undergone a great deal of debate since the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations. Is anything okay if a culture decides it is? Are there any boundaries to cultural

relativism? Do we have to accept everything that a group does, or can an anthropologist ultimately judge that a practice is damaging, harmful, and not deserving of being respected and upheld?

While these debates remain, anthropologists still value cultural relativism (and the worthiness of other peoples and cultures), although perhaps in a modified form that anthropologist Michael Brown calls *cultural relativism 2.0*. As Brown states, cultural relativism 2.0 is "a call to pause before judging, to listen before speaking, and to widen one's views before narrowing them" (2008, 380). In other words, *first give people a chance*.

Anthropology is important today, perhaps even more than when it formally began some 150 years ago. As French anthropologist Maurice Godelier says:

> Anthropology—together with history—is one of the social science disciplines best able to help us understand the complexity of our now globalized world and the nature of the conflicts and crisis we are experiencing. In such a world, it would be irresponsible and indecent for anthropologists [to] stop trying to understand others. (2016, 75–76)

20.3 What Anthropologists Can Do

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Describe the primary areas where the anthropological approach is relevant.
- Identify the ways that anthropologists are specifically trained for today's challenges.
- Explain how anthropological skills can help address contemporary problems.

What Anthropologists Do Today

Anthropologists are at work now to make a difference in our lives. There are various ways in which anthropologists and those utilizing an anthropological lens or framework contribute critically needed skills and resources in the 21st century.

- *Research*. Sometimes referred to as *pure* or *theoretical* research, fieldwork is conducted in all kinds of settings in order to answer practical and theoretical questions that form the basis of anthropology. How do cultures change? How do artifacts and technology evolve within a culture? How do trade and exchange affect the development of cultures?

  Many of the chapters in this text feature stories about anthropological research and its importance in understanding what it means to be human. Each of the subfields engages in distinct types of field research as ways to test theories and advance our knowledge of human beings. Theoretical research is the backbone of academic anthropology.

- *Research and development*. Research and development are associated with practical applications, such as creating or redesigning products or services for governments or corporations. Anthropologists who work in research and development contribute what they know about human behavior and the world around us to projects that serve the interests of human organizations and the human community.

  Cultural anthropologist Genevieve Bell worked for 18 years in research and development for Intel Corporation, the world's largest semiconductor chip manufacturer. Her focus at Intel was on user experience, researching how people use technology and apply it in their lives with the goal of designing more relevant and user-friendly products. Intel valued the way Bell's deep knowledge of human behavior and human culture helped the company better anticipate their clients' needs. Bell's insights helped make Intel a more competitive corporation. She has described her job as "mak[ing] sense of what makes people tick, what delights and frustrates them, and . . . us[ing] those insights to help shape next generation technology innovations. I sit happily at the intersection of cultural practices and technology adoption" (*City Eye* 2017).

FIGURE 20.7 Anthropologist Genevieve Bell works with tech and engineering industries, applying anthropological concepts to make technology more user-friendly and better adapted to our everyday lives. (credit: "Genevieve Bell" by Kevin Krejci/flickr, CC BY 2.0)

In a TED Salon talk titled "6 Big Ethical Questions about the Future of AI (https://openstax.org/r/genevieve_bell_6)," Bell explains that the technological revolution of artificial intelligence is already in progress, affecting many aspects of our lives. She says that the challenge now is to use artificial intelligence "safely, sustainably, and responsibly." Bell advocates for human-scale technology. Using skills and knowledge gained through her training as an anthropologist, she looks at the ways in which technology, culture, and environment interact. In her work today, she continues to use an anthropological approach: "It's about thinking differently, asking different kinds of questions, looking holistically at the world and the systems" (Bell 2020).

Bell left Intel in 2017 to serve as a distinguished professor at the Australian National University College of Engineering and Computer Science, where she serves as the director of the School of Cybernetics and continues to research the interface between culture and technology.

- *Public policy*. Anthropologists are involved in public policy making all over the world. Anthropological skills and outlooks are increasingly valuable to the development of principles and regulatory measures that increase public safety and resolve real-world problems. Applying a holistic approach to these issues allows government and nongovernment organizations to avoid some problems and better anticipate future challenges.

  The American Anthropological Association (AAA) (https://openstax.org/r/ParticipateAndAdvocate) has identified five public policy areas that would greatly benefit from an anthropological approach. In each of these areas, the AAA hopes to involve more anthropologists in public policy in the 21st century and to work collectively to message international, national, and local agencies about the importance of anthropological knowledge and involvement:

  - *Social and cultural aspects of health*: identifying ways in which categories of race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, and age hinder medical delivery.
  - *Culture and diversity in education*: understanding the diversities that affect educational delivery and

the gaps that exist in current educational policies due to such things as changing demographics and new information technologies.
- *An interdisciplinary approach to the environment*: focusing on the ways in which anthropological knowledge contributes to understanding the human dimensions of the environment and interfacing with federal agencies actively seeking to support this type of environmental research.
- *Economic, social, and cultural aspects of the information revolution*: examining the human dimensions of the information revolution and the impact that it is having on our work and personal lives.
- *Globalization and its impact on public policy*: specifically, focusing on issues of conflict and war and the effects of globalization on transnational communities.

One of the challenges that anthropologists face is better educating governments and corporations about the skills they can bring to understanding and addressing contemporary problems. Working collaboratively within and beyond the discipline is important for advancing an awareness of the possibilities that anthropologists offer as public policy advocates.

PROFILES IN ANTHROPOLOGY

Gillian Tett
1967-

FIGURE 20.8 British cultural anthropologist Gillian Tett is a journalist and the U.S. managing editor of the *Financial Times*. (credit: "Gillian Tett FT Autumn Party 2014 Crop" by Financial Times/Wikimedia Commons, CC BY 2.0)

Personal History: Gillian Tett is a British author and journalist who trained in anthropology. She studied at Clare College, Cambridge University, where she earned her PhD in social anthropology after conducting doctoral research in Tajikistan, in what was then the Soviet Union. Tett intentionally chose to turn her anthropological gaze outside of the university setting, where she believed her training would have greater impact.

Area of Anthropology and Importance of Her Work: Though is trained as a social anthropologist, Gillian Tett works for the *Financial Times*, a global daily newspaper, as chair of the editorial board and editor at large in

addition to her role as a journalist. Her articles on finance, business, and political economy appear in the *Financial Times* and in various leading newspapers and media outlets. She forecast early warnings about the 2008 economic downturn, applying her anthropological knowledge and skills to understand emerging global economic patterns, and she participates frequently in conferences on finance and global economics. Tett also contributes to new directions in anthropology; at the joint 2019 American Anthropological Association and Canadian Anthropology Society/La société canadienne d'anthropologie Annual Meeting, she served as a discussant in a presidential session on the topic of breaking down silos in anthropology,

Accomplishments in the Field: Tett has earned various commendations and awards in and outside of the field of anthropology, including the British Press Award for Business and Finance Journalist of the Year in both 2008 and 2009. She was awarded the President's Medal of the British Academy in 2011, given in recognition of "academic-related service activity" beyond the academy. Her book *Fool's Gold: How Unrestrained Greed Corrupted a Dream, Shattered Global Markets, and Unleashed a Catastrophe* (2009), which takes a cultural anthropological approach to analyzing the global economy and financial system, was a *New York Times* best seller and was chosen as the 2009 Financial Book of the Year by *Spear's* magazine. In 2014, Tett received the Royal Anthropological Institute's Marsh Award for Anthropology in the World, which "recognises an outstanding individual based outside academia, one who has shown how to apply anthropology or anthropological ideas to the better understanding of the world's problems" (Royal Anthropological Institute 2021). Her latest book is *Anthro-Vision: A New Way to See in Business and Life* (2021), published by Simon & Schuster.

- *Applied or practicing anthropology*. Anthropologists are engaged in wide-ranging work on the ground in real-life situations, helping address numerous current and emerging needs in communities around the world. Many work within nongovernmental agencies. Some anthropologists are already engaged in efforts pertaining to the COVID-19 pandemic, gathering preliminary data and working to streamline access to treatment and preventative measures.

  In 2014, the WHO reached out to sociocultural anthropologists to help address an outbreak of the Ebola virus in Mali. They sought the help of these anthropologists as liaisons to connect with the local people and lessen their anxieties about the disease, help those recovering cope with the stigma of having had Ebola, and build a bridge between the community and the health system. They also sought anthropological direction on how best to interact with local people while respecting their culture and traditions. The WHO described some of the roles of the anthropologists who aided in this project:

  > The social anthropologists have also helped train teams searching for Ebola patients and monitoring Ebola contacts, teaching them to make allowances for local culture and the rules of hospitality and politeness when visiting families. These factors are key to getting the message across and being heard by members of the community. (World Health Organization 2015)

The global emergency of COVID-19 mobilized a number of anthropologists, especially those in the applied field of medical anthropology. Medical anthropologist Mark Nichter (2020), who has studied emerging diseases and global health for much of his career, was returning from fieldwork in India and Indonesia when COVID-19 cases started being diagnosed in the United States. He traveled from Asian countries, where people were wearing masks and showing a high level of concern for the disease, into Europe and then the United States, where there seemed to be little concern. These different attitudes prompted him to think about other pandemics he had experienced as a medical anthropologist and about how complex these global events can be. Deeply aware of issues of social inequality, he worried about the poor infrastructure conditions in so many countries and the dense populations in refugee camps. What would happen in water-insecure areas where accessing any kind of water, especially clean water for handwashing, was difficult? He wondered just how bad this was going to be as a global event.

During lockdown in the United States, Nichter used his training as a medical anthropologist to create positive change within his community. He first developed a COVID-19 primer, explaining health concepts about COVID-19 and methods of slowing and preventing transmission in everyday terms to help professors and teachers educate themselves and their students. The primer quickly began circulating on campuses in the

United States and around the world. Nichter also worked with fellow anthropologists in a special working group supported by the American Anthropological Association to identify research areas of critical need. Many of these research areas concerned structural threats and areas where mortality data were revealing disparities, indicating that certain populations were more vulnerable than others. Third, Nichter began advocating and working for COVID-19 testing resources, the development of contact tracing, and symptom monitoring to better contain outbreaks within communities. Lastly, he helped develop a health care worker support network with both online and grassroots resources, knowing that frontline workers would be those most taxed by the pandemic. Nichter advocates for what he calls *anticipatory anthropology*. In the context of medical anthropology, anticipatory anthropology acts to shore up the fault lines that have emerged in the global health system, working toward creating stronger resistance to the next health care emergency. "COVID-19 provides an opportunity to build alliances and momentum for significant health care reform" (Nichter 2020).

Anthropological skills are increasingly vital to developing and communicating culturally relevant messages. While global health initiatives are very prominent within the field of applied and practicing anthropology, the range of interventions is wide. Applied anthropology projects might involve improved farming techniques and heirloom seed banks, better educational services, and even work on the front lines with persons displaced by war, migration, or climate emergencies.

Anthropological Skills and Resources

Anthropologists are trained to look at the larger context and understand how smaller, local environments fit into overarching forces. They aim to hold a multicultural perspective that represents various constituencies and to interact with people around them with the goal of better understanding where they are coming from and what things *mean* to them. Anthropologists gather and analyze data that reflects real life *on the ground and in the streets*. The central anthropological specialty is an unfettered interest in human beings.

In 2020, career research and employment website Zippia interviewed a group of teaching and practicing anthropologists about the anthropological skills they believe are most valuable in today's job market. The two quotes below illustrate the breadth of career preparation that anthropology provides:

> Organizations are looking for people who can articulate the value of their experiences. Anthropology provides a broad array of skills. Some [are] more general, such as critical thinking and written and oral communication and teamwork. Some skills are more specific, such as survey and excavation for archaeology positions, research design, data analysis skills (qualitative and quantitative), and familiarity with research ethics. —*John Ziker*

> Young graduates need to think quickly and with skepticism, read situations from multiple angles, and have openness to variable solutions. This means that they need skills in understanding pluralistic vantage points, judging where information comes from and who it benefits and who it hurts, and being gifted at recognizing and acknowledging their own biases. Anthropology teaches these skills as it prepares graduates for work in a wide array of fields. —*Suzanne Morrissey* (Stark et al. 2020)

Anthropologists and anthropology students, undergraduate and graduate, fit into a wide array of careers and contribute valuable skills and resources to their communities everywhere. As people specialists, anthropologists understand how to approach diverse peoples, elicit information about and from them, and work with that information to understand broader situations. Some of the broadly applicable skills that different anthropologists have include interviewing; excavating; mapping; analyzing data using various types of methodologies, including mixed methods (combining qualitative and quantitative methods); applying ethics in difficult, emerging situations; and engaging with new technologies in the sciences. All of these are 21st-century skills and resources. However, the most advantageous of an anthropologist's skills is an attitude of respect and dignity toward diverse peoples everywhere. In our global world, this may be the most important asset of all. As anthropologist Tim Ingold says, anthropologists "study … *with* people" and "learn *from* them, not just *about* them" (2018, 32).

How Anthropology Can Lead in the Future

Career and employment trends today align with what anthropologists do, whether or not one is a full-time

practicing anthropologist. Students heading into any fields that address the human condition, past or present, will benefit from studies in anthropology. Within colleges and universities across the world, there is a reemergence of transdisciplinary approaches that utilize methods and perspectives from multiple disciplines to study and propose solutions to complex problems. This educational model, sometimes called the *matrix model* (National Academy of Sciences, National Academy of Engineers, and Institute of Medicine 2005), has resulted in the development of new interdisciplinary degree programs such as the biomedical informatics program at Stanford University; the Indigenous food, energy, and water systems program at the University of Arizona; and the science, medicine, and technology in culture program at Union College. Training in anthropological holism is the ideal foundation for working in teams with multiple interests and a shared focus on the larger context. Specifically, the four-field approach in anthropology prepares researchers to apply a keen perception of the ways in which biology and culture interact and influence each other.

With the increasing prominence of social media and grassroots communication across cultures, it is important that emerging leaders have the ability to interview people, elicit relevant information from them, and analyze what they think, do, and desire. Anthropologists are trained to interact with others, seek connections and patterns in what they observe, and analyze the symbolic significance of what they find.

Anthropologists are also trained to work in the field, *wherever and whatever the field may be*, taking their offices and research labs into the communities in which they work and live. Accustomed to being flexible and adaptable to the needs of the situation and letting the field dictate how best to accomplish their work, anthropologists have the skills, technology, and experience to work well in a global community.

In the 20th century, academia sought to become ever more specialized, constructing departments, specialties, and subspecialties to home in on very particular subjects such as a disease, a genre of literature, or a type of religion. This approach was an advance over the more generalist approach that was common in the 19th century, in which academics were trained in very broad fields such as medicine, ancient history, or culture. Now, in the 21st century, the shift is toward a more complex and multifaceted understanding of how we live and the challenges we face. Many anthropology programs today provide vocational skills and workplace training. There is a growing awareness that we need to develop the ability to think both generally and systematically (such as in an ecosystemic approach) while also seeking to understand the particularities of specific challenges. Anthropology, with its holistic approach, mixed methodology analyses, and deep, abiding appreciation of diversity and the dignity of all people, is situated at the crossroads of what comes next. This is how anthropology can guide us as we move into the future.

As Geertz said, “We have turned out to be rather good at waddling in” (1985, 624). Anthropological skills are based on flexibility and adaptation to a changing world, open-mindedness and openness to new ideas, and a willingness to engage with complex issues in order to find solutions to problems facing our world today. The anthropological skillset is critical in the 21st century.

You can read more about the important work of anthropologists today in the Profile features in each chapter. Through research and work such as the examples featured there, anthropologists are changing the world.

MINI-FIELDWORK ACTIVITY

Global Challenges

Choose three global challenges, and research more about them. Consider how these three global challenges are linked to one another and to long-standing historical inequities. Collect information on the current state of each problem in the United States and worldwide, what measures are being taken to mitigate the problem, and whether there are any local initiatives in your own community. Consider both campus and community organizations. Using what you have learned about anthropology, propose three anthropological skills that you could employ to help address each of these challenges.

Key Terms

asset a tool or condition that can be harnessed to increase value and effect positive change.

biodiversity the variety of plants and animals that exist on Earth and form a living ecosystem.

ethnosphere the sum total of all of human knowledge across time.

values principles and standards of behavior that are considered important.

Summary

As a discipline, anthropology includes academic and applied aspects that focus on, respectively, developing new theories and solving practical problems. Today, we face a growing number of global problems, most of them linked to one another and to long-standing historical inequities and injustice. Many of the problems we experience in our local lives derive from these major issues, and every one of them intersects with and affects cultural traditions and contemporary social behaviors. In 2021, the United Nations identified 22 critical global issues that transcend national boundaries and affect people everywhere, with those who suffer various forms of injustice typically experiencing greater effects from these challenges than those living in more stable communities. Three of the challenges are major actions areas for philanthropic organizations such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation: climate change, gender inequality and gender-based violence, and global health. Intersecting with these global issues are the devastating losses we face in terms of biological, cultural, and linguistic diversity.

The term *ethnosphere*, first coined by Canadian cultural anthropologist Wade Davis, refers to the sum total of all human knowledge across time—the human cultural legacy. The diverse ways in which we humans have solved or managed the challenges of our lives are a rich storehouse for our future. Too often, contemporary people feel we have little to learn from those who are different from us or who came before us, but the solutions to our current problems are founded upon this legacy. As globalization proceeds, conjoining our lives in myriad ways, it is important to remember that diversity is a storehouse of critical knowledge from the generations before us and the cultures around us, many of which are fighting today to survive. By preserving and valuing the ethnosphere's diversity, we preserve ourselves, our children's futures, and the hopes we have for our planet.

The anthropological approach views humans as part of a wider system of meaning, as actors and change-makers within a dynamic environment populated by others. Across cultures, those others can include other species, plant and animal, and spirits as well as other human beings. It is the human ability to imagine and construct the universe in which we live that most interests anthropologists. The anthropological perspective is grounded by principles and standards of behavior considered important to understanding other people and their ways of life. These include the value of all cultures; the value of diversities, biological and cultural; the importance of change over time; the importance of cultural relativism; and an acknowledgment of the dignity of all human beings. These anthropological values undergird our discipline.

Anthropological studies produce documentation of immeasurable worth. Through anthropological research, we collect, preserve, and share the stories of living humans as well as human artifacts, sites, and bodies. Today, anthropologists and those using an anthropological lens contribute to the 21st century in various ways, including through research, research and development, public policy, and applied or practicing anthropology. Career and employment trends today align with what anthropologists do, whether or not one is a full-time practicing anthropologist. Students heading into any field that addresses the human condition, past or present, will benefit from studies in anthropology.

Critical Thinking Questions

1. What do you consider to be the three most critical global issues? Why?
2. In what ways is the ethnosphere valuable to our lives today?
3. Do you have any traditional forms of knowledge? If so, how do you use them? Think about practices such as cooking.
4. What anthropological skills can best address the problems our global community faces today?
5. What are the most valuable anthropological skills

in today's professions?
6. Why does anthropology matter?
7. Consider your own academic major or career goals. How can anthropological skills be applied to your professional aspirations?
8. How can anthropology lead in the future?

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