

## “Essential” Ethnographies and Readings in Anthropology

In response to a request from the graduate students in our department for a list of the “essential” ethnographies and readings in anthropology, I asked the faculty to each nominate ethnographies and other books that they considered essential for anthropologists. Because each of us could name many items in each category, to keep the listing to a manageable size, I asked the faculty to limit their nominations to 5 in each category. Making these choices proved challenging as each of us had to omit from our lists items that we consider very highly. Some nominated classics, others newer texts, and some a combination of both. Below are the lists that result from this process. (Dates in square brackets are the original publication dates.) Keep in mind that these lists are not the result of faculty discussion and consensus, but represent their individual forced choices. As well, no one on the faculty listed their own ethnographies or books, but those are important too, of course. I hope this list is useful.

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### 1. Essential Ethnographies

- Abu-Lughod, Lila. 1986. *Veiled Sentiments: Honor and Poetry in a Bedouin Society*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Aretxaga, Begoña. 1997. *Shattering Silence: Women, Nationalism and Political Subjectivity in Northern Ireland*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Ashcraft, Norman. 1973. *Colonialism and Underdevelopment: Processes of Political Economic Change in British Honduras*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Barth, Fredrik. 1987. *Cosmologies in the Making: A generative Approach to Cultural Variation in Inner New Guinea*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Bateson, Gregory. 1958 [1936]. *Naven: A Survey of the Problems Suggested by a Composite Picture of Culture of a New Guinea Tribe Drawn from Three Points of View, 2nd Edition*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Biehl, João Guilherme. 2005. *Vita: Life in a Zone of Social Abandonment*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Coburn, Noah. 2011. *Bazaar Politics: Power and Pottery in an Afghan Market Town*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Das, Veena. 2006. *Life and Words: Violence and the Descent into the Ordinary*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Dumont, Louis. 1970. *Homo Hierarchicus: The Caste System and its Implications*. London, UK: Weidenfeld and Nicolson.
- Early, Evelyn A. 1993. *Baladi Women of Cairo: Playing with an Egg and a Stone*. Boulder, CO: L. Rienner Publishers.
- Evans-Pritchard, Edward Evan. 1937. *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic Among the Azande, with a foreword by Professor C.G. Seligman*. Oxford, UK: The Clarendon Press.
- Evans-Pritchard, Edward Evan. 1940. *The Nuer: A Description of the Modes of Livelihood and Political Institutions of a Nilotic People*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Farmer, Paul. 1999. *Infections and Inequalities: The Modern Plagues, updated edition with a new Preface*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

- Ferguson, James. 1994. *The Anti-Politics Machine: "Development," Depoliticization, and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Flueckiger, Joyce Burkhalter. 2006. In *Amma's Healing Room: Gender and Vernacular Islam in South India*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Geertz, Clifford. 1963. *Peddlers and Princes: Social Change and Economic Modernization in two Indonesian Towns*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Graeber, David. 2009. *Direct Action: An Ethnography*. San Francisco, CA: AK Press.
- Hale, Charles R. 2006. *Más que un Indio = More than an Indian: Racial Ambivalence and Neoliberal Multiculturalism in Guatemala*. Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research Press.
- Kenyatta, Jomo. 1938. *Facing Moutn Kenya: The Tribal Life of the Gikuyu, with an introduction by B. Malinowski*. London, UK: Secker and Warburg.
- Latour, Bruno, and Steve Woolgar. 1986 [1979]. *Laboratory Life: The Construction of Scientific Facts, introduction by Jonas Salk, with a new postscript and index by the authors*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Lewis, Oscar. 1951. *Life in a Mexican Village: Tepoztlán Restudied*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.
- Malinowski, Bronislaw. 1922. *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*. London, UK: G. Routledge and Sons Ltd.
- Malinowski, Bronislaw. 1932. *The Sexual Life of Savages in North-Western Melanisia: An Ethnographic Account of Courtship, Marriage and Family Life Among the Natives of the Trobriand Islands*. London, UK: G. Routledge and Sons, Ltd.
- Martin, Emily. 1994. *Flexible Bodies: Tracking Immunity in American Culture from the Days of Polio to the Age of AIDS*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- Mead, Margaret. 1943. *Coming of Age in Samoa*. New York, NY: Penguin Books.
- Mitchell, James Clyde. 1956. *The Kalela Dance: Aspects of Social Relationships Among Urban Africans in Northern Rhodesia*. Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press.
- Munn, Nancy D. 1986. *The Fame of the Gawa: A Symbolic Study of Value Transformation in a Massim (Papua New Guinea) Society*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Myerhoff, Barbara G. 1980 [1978]. *Number Our Days*. New York, NY: Simon and Schuster.
- Nordstrom, Carolyn. 2004. *Shadows of War: Violence, Power, and International Profiteering in the Twenty-First Century*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Ong, Aihwa. 1987. *Spirits of Resistance and Capitalist Discipline: Factory Women in Malaysia*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Ong, Aihwa. 1999. *Flexible Citizenship: The Cultural Logics of Transnationality*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Ortner, Sherry B. 1989. *High Religion: A Cultural and Political History of Sherpa Buddhism*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Ortner, Sherry B. 2003. *New Jersey Dreaming: Capital, Culture and the Class of '58*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Powdermaker, Hortense. 1993 [1938]. *After Freedom: A Cultural Study in the Deep South, with an Introductory Essay by Brackette F. Williams and Drexel G. Woodson*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Press, Irwin. 1975. *Tradition and Adaptation: Life in a Modern Yucatan Maya Village*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

- Rabinow, Paul. 1977. *Reflections on Fieldwork in Morocco, with a foreword by Robert N. Bellah*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Rappaport, Roy A. 1984 [1968]. *Pigs for the Ancestors: Ritual in the Ecology of a New Guinea People, enlarged edition*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Redfield, Robert. 1973 [1930]. *Tepoztlán: A Mexican Village, A Study of Folk Life*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Seremetakis, Constantina Nadia. 1991. *The Last Word: Women, Death and Divination in Inner Mani*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Spradley, James P. 1970. *You Owe Yourself a Drunk: An Ethnography of Urban Nomads*. Boston, MA: Little Brown.
- Tax, Sol 1963 [1953]. *Penny Capitalism: A Guatemalan Indian Economy*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Tsing, Anna Lowenhaupt. 1993. *In the Realm of the Diamond Queen: Marginality in an Out-of-the-Way Place*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Tsing, Anna Lowenhaupt. 2004. *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connections*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Turner, Victor Witter. 1957. *Schism and Continuity in an African Society: A Study of Ndembu Village Life*. Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press.
- Turner, Victor Witter. 1967. *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Warner, William Lloyd. 1959. *The Living and the Dead: A Study in the Symbolic Life of Americans*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Willis, Paul E. 1981 [1977]. *Learning to Labor: How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs, with a New Introduction and Afterword*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

## 2. Essential Books (Not Ethnographies)

- Agamben, Giorgio. 2005. *State of Exception*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Anderson, Benedict Richard O'Gorman. 1983. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London, UK: Verso.
- Appadurai, Arjun. 1996. *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Appadurai, Arjun. 2006. *Fear of Small Numbers: An Essay on the Geography of Anger*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Ardener, Shirley, ed. 1975. *Perceiving Women*. New York, NY: Wiley.
- Banton, Michael, ed. 1966. *The Social Anthropology of Complex Societies*. London, UK: Tavistock.
- Banton, Michael, ed. 1968. *The Relevance of Models for Social Anthropology*. London, UK: Tavistock.
- Barnes, John Arundel. 1971. *Three Styles in the Study of Kinship*. London, UK: Tavistock.
- Barth, Fredrik, ed. 1969. *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Cultural Difference*. London, UK: Allen and Unwin.
- Benedict, Ruth. 1989 [1934]. *Patterns of Culture, with a new foreword by Mary Catherine Bateson and a preface by Margaret Mead*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.

- Boas, Franz. 1940. *Race, Language and Culture*. New York, NY: The Macmillan Company.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1977. *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1990. *The Logic of Practice*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Brown, Donald E. 1991. *Human Universals*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.
- Comaroff, John L., and Jean Comaroff. 1992. *Ethnography and the Historical Imagination*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Comaroff, John L., and Jean Comaroff. 2009. *Ethnicity, Inc.* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- D'Aquili, Eugene, Charles D. Laughlin Jr., and John McManus. 1979. *The Spectrum of Ritual: A Biogenetic Structural Analysis*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
- Douglas, Mary. 2005 [1966]. *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo, with a new preface by the author*. London, UK: Routledge.
- Durkheim, Émile. 1915. *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*. London, UK: G. Allen & Unwin, Ltd.
- Durkheim, Émile. 1933. *Émile Durkheim on the Division of Labor in Society, being a translation of his De la Division du Travail Social*. New York, NY: The Macmillan Company.
- Edgerton, Robert B. 1992. *Sick Societies: Challenging the Myth of Primitive Harmony*. New York, NY: The Free Press.
- Farmer, Paul. 2003. *Pathologies of Power: Health, Human Rights, and the New War on the Poor, foreword by Amartya Sen*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Fortes, M., and E.E. Evans-Prichard, eds. 1940. *African Political Systems*. London, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Foucault, Michel. 1977. *Discipline and Punishment: The Birth of the Prison*. New York, NY: Pantheon Books.
- Geertz, Clifford. 1973. *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Gerth, H.H., and C. Wright Mills, eds. 2009. *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology, with a new preface by Bryan S. Turner*. London, UK: Routledge.
- Goffman, Erving. 1959 [1956]. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday.
- Harris, Marvin. 1999. *Theories of Culture in Post-modern Times*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira.
- Harrison, Lawrence E., and Samuel P. Huntington, eds. 2000. *Culture Matters: How Values Shape Human Progress*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Hodding, Ian, ed. 2001. *Archaeological Theory Today*. New York, NY: Polity Press.
- James, Deetz. 1996. *In Small Things Forgotten: An Archaeology of Early American Life*. New York, NY: Anchor
- Kuper, Adam. 1999. *Culture: The Anthropologists' Account*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Lévi-Strauss, Claude. 1963. *Structural Anthropology*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Lévi-Strauss, Claude. 1966. *The Savage Mind*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Lewis, I.M., ed. 1968. *History and Social Anthropology*. London, UK: Tavistock.
- Lock, Margaret, and Judith Farquhar, eds. 2007. *Beyond the Body Proper: Reading the Anthropology of Material Life*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Mauss, Marcel. 1954. *The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies*. Glencoe, IL: The Free Press.

- McGuire, Randall. 2002. *A Marxist Archaeology*. Clinton Corners, NY: Percheron Press.
- Miller, Daniel, ed. 2005. *Materiality*. Durham, NY: Duke University Press.
- Mintz, Sidney W. 1985. *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History*. New York, NY: Viking Penguin.
- Mitchell, J. Clyde, ed. 1969. *Social Networks in Urban Situations: Analyses of Personal Relationships in Central African Towns*. Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press.
- Moore, Henrietta L. 1988. *Feminism and Anthropology*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Needham, Rodney, ed. 1971. *Rethinking Kinship and Marriage*. London, UK: Tavistock.
- Ong, Aihwa, and Stephen J. Collier, eds. 2005. *Global Assemblages: Technology, Politics, and Ethics as Anthropological Problems*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.
- Ortner, Sherry B. 1996. *Making Gender: The Politics and Erotics of Culture*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- Puar, Jasbir K. 2007. *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Radcliffe-Brown, Alfred Reginald. 1952. *Structure and Function in Primitive Society: Essays and Addresses, with a Foreword by E.E. Evans-Prichard and Fred Eggan*. London, UK: Cohen and West.
- Sahlins, Marshall David. 1985. *Islands of History*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Sahlins, Marshall David. 2000. *Culture in Practice: Selected Essays*. New York, NY: Zone Books.
- Said, Edward. 1978. *Orientalism*. New York, NY: Pantheon Books.
- Scott, James C. 1998. *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition have Failed*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Shore, Bradd. 1996. *Culture in Mind: Cognition, Culture, and the Problem of Meaning*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- South, Stanley. 1977. *Method and Theory in Historical Archaeology*. New York, NY: Academic Press.
- Stocking Jr., George W. 1982 [1968]. *Race, Culture and Evolution: Essays in the History of Anthropology, with a new Preface*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Stocking Jr., George W., ed. 1982 [1974]. *A Franz Boas Reader: The Shaping of American Anthropology, 1883-1911*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Thompson, Edward Palmer. 1963. *The Making of the English Working Class*. New York, NY: Pantheon Books.
- Turner, Vitor Witter. 1969. *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*. London, UK: Routledge and Keegan Paul.
- Vansina, Jan. 1985. *Oral Tradition as History*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Wallerstein, Immanuel. 1980. *The Modern World System: Mercantilism and the Consolidation of the European World-Economy, 1600-1750*. New York, NY: Academic Press.
- Weber, Max. 1930. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, translated by Talcott Parsons, foreword by R.H. Tawney*. New York, NY: Scribner.
- Weber, Max. 1947. *The Theory of Economic Organization, translated by A.M. Henderson and Talcott Parsons, with an introduction by Talcott Parsons*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Willey, Gordon, and Jeremy Sabloff. 1993. *A History of American Archaeology, 3rd Edition*. New York, NY: W.H. Freeman.

Wolf, Eric, and (with) Sydel Silverman. 2001. *Pathways of Power: Building an Anthropology of the Modern World*, foreword by Aram A. Yengoyan. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Wolf, Eric R. 1982. *Europe and the People without History*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.