

Introduction

Genesis of the encyclopedia

Anthropology occupies a quintessentially global position within the humanities and social sciences. It is concerned simultaneously with both the universals of the human condition and the specifics and deep contexts of cultural diversity. In recent years, anthropologists have become increasingly aware of the need to recognize multivocality across the discipline and the existence of distinctive *anthropologies*, together with the traffic occurring between them, as opposed to one or a few exclusive paradigms. This shift of vision brings with it a parallel recognition of the need for global anthropology to reach outward beyond its traditional academic boundaries and to connect both with neighboring disciplines in the human and social sciences and with broader spheres of civil society, such as those of public policy, health care, international development, and education.

Cutting across these shifts in the global positioning of anthropology are longer-standing divisions within the subject itself. These have taken varying forms within different national traditions, and these differences are in turn reflected in the diversity of institutional arrangements for research and the teaching of anthropology in universities and colleges across the world. The four-fields conception of anthropology (physical anthropology, cultural anthropology, archaeology, and linguistics), which has predominated in the United States for much of the twentieth century and into the twenty-first, has not prevailed elsewhere. This is particularly so in the United Kingdom, where British social anthropology has carved a distinctive character and range of concerns. The intellectual relations between the major component subdisciplines within anthropology have also shifted over time. For example, throughout much of the twentieth century, and particularly in Britain again, formal contact between biological or evolutionary and sociocultural anthropology was minimal. There were many reasons for this estrangement, and there was more informal exchange of ideas across the subdisciplines than is often recognized. But only in recent years have the barriers begun to dissolve more systematically under the pressure of new knowledge about the roots of our common humanity. At the same time, new areas of study have emerged and established themselves in anthropology's mainstream over recent decades. Medical anthropology, environmental anthropology, visual anthropology, and the anthropology of tourism are good examples of these newer leading edges of growth. The boundaries of thinking and research in anthropology have become increasingly fluid and negotiable, and this trend is well reflected in the encyclopedia's content.

To add to the picture's complexity, anthropology in many parts of the world has suffered from a lack of public visibility compared to cognate disciplines across the human and social sciences. Burdened by stereotyped misperceptions of the subject

as an arcane one concerned only with the “primitive,” the “remote,” and the “exotic,” anthropologists—with some notable exceptions—have been less than successful in explaining to a wider public the discipline’s actual subject matter and its capacity to engage deeply and intimately with human life in the here and now. Nor has there been consensus within the discipline on the possibility, or even desirability, of seeking such a public presence. A long-standing difference of vision continues to divide the discipline between those holding that anthropology deals with issues of such complexity as to be accessible only to advanced specialists, and those believing that its organizing ideas as well as its engrossing detail lend themselves to more general dissemination and can therefore contribute to an informed public understanding of the intricacies of the human world. It is the latter position that we follow here. The twenty-first century brings large challenges to analysts and decision makers in the public sphere, to citizens in a globalizing world, to educators, and to academic disciplines seeking to document and comprehend the diversity and complexity of human life in society. In designing and compiling the encyclopedia, the editors and publisher have taken the view that anthropology has a key part to play in comprehending these challenges and meeting them. Among the work’s aims is that of contributing usefully to the task of conveying the distinctive insights of anthropology to its many potential audiences—including, but not confined to, specialist practitioners and students.

These then have been the guiding principles behind the selection of the encyclopedia’s themes, topics, and authors: recognition of the many distinctive traditions and voices that interweave to constitute contemporary anthropology; inclusiveness of scope across its historical and emergent subdisciplines; an outward-looking stance toward related fields and nonspecialist audiences; and clarity of style and presentation for accessibility to a nonspecialist as well as a specialist readership.

In common with similar works of reference, the encyclopedia has been a number of years in the making. In the course of many informal conversations during successive conferences in the United States and the United Kingdom through the late 2000s with Rosalie Robertson, then at Wiley Blackwell, it became clear that there was space for a new *International Encyclopedia of Anthropology* and that such a work would find a natural place in the publisher’s existing stable of reference works in the humanities and social sciences. The opportunity, which then became the founding manifesto for the encyclopedia, was to create a reference work grounded on the principles here outlined.

Selection of topic areas and editorial team

The encyclopedia is arranged alphabetically by entry title. The logic behind its organization is not visible on the surface. Readers may, however, wish to know the basis on which the content was planned and commissioned. The initial task was to find a way of arranging the total range of anthropological knowledge under discrete headings that could form the basis for appointing specialist associate editors in each of the major topic areas. These in turn would propose entry titles within their fields, search for expert authors, and be responsible for academic review of the entries commissioned by the publisher at their behest. Any such carving out of topic headings is of course highly

arbitrary and can only be, at best, a device to make organization of the material manageable in practical terms. Inevitably there are multiple overlaps, with much content spilling across more than one of the chosen headings. After wide-ranging discussion and seeking of advice, fifteen thematic areas were initially selected as a working frame. As the encyclopedia took shape and experience accumulated, these were refined to generate entry groupings, accessible through the Browse by Topic listing, intended to serve as a navigational aid to the reader. They have undergone further revision as the online encyclopedia itself has been reviewed and expanded. As readers will quickly see upon consulting the Browse by Topic listing, the groupings are not exclusive, and many entry titles appear under more than one head.

Tensions inherent in the project

In common with any attempt to map the discipline of anthropology as a whole, the encyclopedia stands in structural tension within a cluster of pressures and influences. Some of the most significant of these are worth examining.

Anthropology and anthropologies

The placing of “World Anthropologies” as a theme at the heart of the project was a fundamental decision of principle, albeit one that creates an immediate dilemma. Across the discipline, the shared sense that there are core organizing concepts that characterize the anthropological style—such as holism, deep local understanding, and comparison—coexists with a diversity of perspectives across the environments in which anthropology is practiced and taught. Anthropologies across the globe are deeply situated in their several histories, environments, and contexts of practice. At the same time, these same world anthropologies also *converse* with one another in multiple ways. Such conferring across anthropologies occurs on many levels and scales; is dialectical in character; and often reflects imbalances of power between so-called central and peripheral locations. For this to come into focus, we need only to consider the linkages between academic institutions across differing places and times; the pathways and personal stories of individual scholars past and present encountering established theoretical frames, and sometimes creating new ones in keeping with regional concerns; and of course the loadings coming from dominant conventions and languages of publication.

There is an ongoing and dialectical tension, therefore, between “anthropology” and “anthropologies”; and the task of recognizing and accommodating this tension, within a work of reference such as this, is as challenging as it is essential. The encyclopedia brings together discussion of “world anthropologies” and those of many individual national and regional traditions, with parallel examination of the unifying constructs and debates that are the subject’s articulating scaffold. The theme of multivocality has been further reinforced by including within the design as many articles as possible dedicated to the emergence and practice of anthropology in the principal nations and regions where it has a presence, as well as content documenting national and

transnational associations and professional organizations for anthropology. Both this diversity and this commonality of approach also contain multiple individual voices and styles, as well as areas of inevitable disconnection and fracture. Documenting these within the encyclopedia is part of an intentional strategy to convey to the reader an understanding of the subject's overall complexity and richness.

Anthropology's history and histories

The foregoing discussion and strategy flow rather naturally into the encyclopedia's treatment of anthropology's relationship with its past. Early in the design process, a decision was made not to address "the" history of anthropology as a separate theme but rather to encourage authors to incorporate a clear historical dimension into their writing wherever appropriate. The aim was, in part, to avoid privileging particular, perhaps dominant, narratives of the past over others that may be globally less known but that also merited attention and respect. The position taken has been that, as there are anthropologies and anthropology, so there is both a history and histories of the subject. And, in similar fashion, these histories sometimes converge back in time to common roots and intellectual ancestries, while at points diverging into different presents. In his entry on "World Anthropologies" Eduardo Restrepo argues that some anthropologies, notably but not exclusively those of the global South, have undergone forms of "silencing" that have made them appear as "anthropologies without histories." An aim of the encyclopedia has been to counter, so far as possible, this selective silencing of situated histories. Facilitating this in turn has been an attempt to feature as many biographical entries as space has allowed, documenting the lives and achievements of major scholars, nearly all belonging to past generations, who have played a constitutive role in shaping the anthropologies of today. Much effort has been made to include among these biographical subjects not only the founding ancestors of the Euro-American canon, but less universally well-known figures from other world anthropologies, whose achievements and histories are equally worthy of honor. Judged by the results, this editorial strategy has paid off handsomely. Not only are powerful historical analyses to be found within entries distributed throughout the encyclopedia, but the strategy has had the effect of giving freedom to individual authors to reach deeply into anthropology's historical roots within their own places.

Disciplinary and subdisciplinary boundaries

In determining content and coverage, questions have needed to be addressed as to what should count as anthropology for the purpose of inclusion. The position taken has been that potential authors and their subject matter institutionally located in disciplinary areas adjacent to anthropology, such as psychology, economics, or political science, could have much to contribute to the scope and interest of the work. Accordingly, a principle of openness has been broadly followed, avoiding any attempt to demarcate a rigid territory or fixed disciplinary frontiers as *a priori* tests of eligibility for inclusion. This editorial policy is taken to be in keeping with the discipline's own history of shifting and sometimes contested boundaries. Thus, in commissioning entries the associate

editors have been encouraged to solicit contributions from scholars who may be institutionally located outside anthropology but who are able to connect their knowledge with anthropology's own distinctive concerns. It was confidently left to the discretion of individual associate editors, within the academic review process, to adjudge issues of relevance case by case.

Consequent to this strategy, the encyclopedia aims to offer the reader an anthropology—and anthropologies—with edges that are intentionally indistinct and often porous, rather than being determinate or contained from the outset. Attention was drawn above to the pluralist strategy followed with respect to the geographies and histories of anthropology. Consistently with this, an intended indeterminacy at the margins came to apply in the treatment of the subject's content. This again has brought consequences that can be considered healthy both for the encyclopedia and, more broadly, for anthropology itself. In addition to abundant material reflecting the well-established internal subdisciplines, such as economic, environmental, evolutionary, developmental, medical, legal, and political anthropology that also extend into other specialisms, the interested reader will find content touching on new areas of potential cross-fertilization with fields hitherto less explored for anthropology. A few examples are brain science, theory of mind, educational policy, evolutionary genetics, philosophy, and contemporary psychology.

Institutional organization, language, and writing for an encyclopedia

The final cluster of tensions to be discussed here concerns the institutional organization of anthropological practice and its linkages with language and writing. These issues spring up at many levels. From the earliest planning stages, it was recognized that the encyclopedia needed to convey a broad picture of both the content and the institutional situations of anthropology. As noted, the latter are most explicitly represented in the many entries devoted, first, to anthropologies in particular countries and regions, with their specific concerns and institutional platforms for teaching and research—and their relations with states and other external powers—and, second, in those devoted to discipline-based associations and professional bodies, both national and transnational. A deeply entwined issue is that of language of composition and publication. While English has advantages as a de facto lingua franca, the academic biases created by its dominance (and that of a few other languages to a lesser extent) in scholarly writing and publishing are evident. These dominances, and the related questions surrounding who is allowed to write anthropology, have been well explored elsewhere—including, reflexively, within the encyclopedia itself (Gordon Mathews, “Anthropological Knowledge and Styles of Publication”; Anna Robinson-Pant, “Academic Literacies, Ethnographic Perspectives on”). Mathews discusses the dilemma in depth, and argues for a long-term resolution:

One can only hope for the emergence of a global anthropology based not in native-speaker English but in a universal English that enables more and more of the world's anthropologists to communicate with one another. It can also be hoped that world standards of anthropological citation will become ever broader, with citation

indexes increasingly representing not just the West but the world. (“Anthropological Knowledge and Styles of Publication”)

The dilemma of language dominance has to be acknowledged, and all effort made to mitigate the worst and most distorting of its effects. We publish here in English, but have striven to give voice to the many non-anglophone authors writing in a language that is not their primary one. Much editorial effort has gone into encouraging and supporting authors thus situated. Some authors have had their articles professionally translated into English before submission; in other cases, associate editors have generously supplied a translation. For some authors, it is likely that their ability to write in English, even if it is not their first language, helped to *confirm* their conscious standing as international scholars. At the same time, it cannot be denied that the requirement to write in English can have had excluding effects, of unknown extent, on potential authors unable or unwilling to write in English, or lacking confidence in their ability to do so. This therefore must set a limit to the encyclopedia’s claim to be a truly global reference work. At the stages of copy-editing, proof-reading, and final signing-off of entries, textual adjustments were sometimes made to clarify authors’ intentions, where they had had difficulty conveying their meaning in coherent English. Remarkably perhaps, at the final approval stages no complaints were received from authors that their intentions had been misrepresented in the course of these adjustments. This absence of complaint testifies to the skill and sensitivity of the publisher’s copy-editors and proof-readers; and to the strong case for recognizing these professionals as *agents* in the production of knowledge, rather than as mere providers of a neutral technical service. Furthermore, it is to be hoped that parts at least of the work will in future be translated into other languages of anthropology.

The dictionary language in which one writes and publishes is, of course, no minor or surface matter. But beyond it lie other questions concerning academic writing; and these are of relevance to writing for an encyclopedia. As noted earlier, a defining ambition for this work has been to achieve clarity of style and transparency of presentation to render the publication as accessible as possible to nonspecialist audiences. For anthropology in general, this aim is often not well served by the professional training and discipline to which scholars are subject in the course of career development (Eriksen 2006). Anthropology is not of course the only human discipline whose practitioners sometimes have difficulty explaining the subject outside its own professional silos; and more than one approach can be taken to analyzing and countering this impediment to communication. One such approach, however, is of particular and reflexive interest for the case of anthropology, and is also given attention in the encyclopedia itself.

The approach to writing within anthropology that has come to be known as New Literacy Studies has for some years explored various forms of literacy, within a conceptual frame that stresses literacy as practice, ideologically driven and actively taken hold of by individuals and groups to meet particular writing needs. Building on the groundbreaking work of Brian Street (1984), the notion of multiple literacies, seen as specific to groups or domains of practice, has gained widespread acceptance. Within this frame, considerable research has focused on academic literacies, which are understood as “the multiple (and often hierarchical) social and cultural practices around reading

and writing in academic contexts” and as foregrounding “the relationship between reading, writing, learning and knowledge construction” (Robinson-Pant, “Academic Literacies, Ethnographic Perspectives on”). Research on academic literacies has concentrated mainly on the ways in which student writing comes to be disciplined and constrained to conform to academic norms. But from the standpoint of New Literacy Studies, the notion of academic literacies sheds light on the writing practices of established scholars as well as those of students, and can be seen as a key component of professional socialization and career building.

Turning the spotlight of New Literacy Studies reflexively onto the case of the encyclopedia allows us to reframe, and to theorize, the quest for transparency of presentation identified above. Seen through a prism of multiple literacies, this editorial aim now acquires a deeper resonance. Part of the challenge of writing for a work of reference such as this—and more generally for developing publicly intelligible anthropologies—is to construct novel forms of academic literacy that will be capable of navigating across the boundaries between institution-based academic discourses and others, and of achieving greater openness of anthropological knowledge to nonspecialists without compromise to the subject’s precision and rigor. Alongside its other aims, the encyclopedia seeks to contribute, on a theoretical plane, to such a construction of inclusive literacies.

Navigating the encyclopedia

The encyclopedia’s more than a thousand substantive entries are presented alphabetically by title but are conceptually organized in layers of inclusivity. At the most general level are to be found entries signposting anthropology’s fundamental ideas and its major subdivisions: “Anthropology: Scope of the Discipline”; then “Biological and Evolutionary Anthropology,” “Social and Cultural Anthropology,” “Archaeological Approaches in Anthropology,” and “Language and Anthropology.” At the next level are entries giving an overview of particular specialisms, such as “Economic Anthropology,” “Environmental Anthropology,” “International Development, Anthropology in,” “Law and Anthropology,” “Medical Anthropology,” “Political Anthropology,” and “Visual Anthropology.” Cross-cutting these overview entries, and with much intentional overlap of coverage, are entries dedicated to the distinctive character and concerns of anthropologies worldwide; and those documenting the varied discipline-based organizations. At the next level again are entries addressing major areas of research concentration within anthropology, such as cognition, evolutionary psychology, gender, gift giving, kinship and marriage, museum anthropology, and ritual. Nested conceptually within these, once more, are entries focusing in detail on specific topics and debates. Shorter definitional entries introduce the reader to significant terms and concepts that are or have been current within the discipline, while biographical entries shine a spotlight on the life and achievements of selected major scholars. Abundant cross-referencing between entries at all levels is intended to help the reader to navigate the encyclopedia and to track an interest or a theme across the entire structure. The abovementioned listing of entries under thematic headings, found under Browse by Topic, provides additional signposting, as noted above. References and further

reading recommendations follow each entry and offer guidelines for further journeys of exploration throughout anthropology's wider reach.

Throughout the encyclopedia, the guiding aim of the editorial team and publisher is, within the confines of space and budget, to present to readers as many as possible of the manifold faces of anthropology. We seek to offer readers an authentic taste of the intrinsic fascination of the subject and its fundamental importance in the world of today.

Acknowledgments

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Update for the online edition, 2020

The 2020 edition sees some significant new developments, in keeping with the encyclopedia's ambition to keep abreast of emerging trends in the discipline. It is my pleasure to welcome Professor Simon Coleman of the University of Toronto, who joins me as joint editor in chief. Together we have reviewed the design and identified areas for expansion and new content over the coming period. The topic areas have been extended to include urban anthropology and public understanding and dissemination of anthropology, while the coverage of archaeology and paleoscience is being deepened and there is a new focus on language and anthropology. Professors John Eade, Thomas Hylland Eriksen, and Robin Shoaps join us as new associate editors. New content is being added to existing topic areas, and it is intended that this will continue in 2021 and beyond.

Hilary Callan
Joint Editor in Chief

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