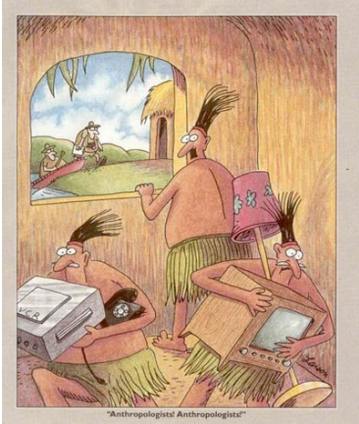


What is Anthropology?



“Anthropologists! Anthropologists!”

What is Anthropology?

- Anthropology is the study of the human species and its immediate ancestors.
- Anthropology is **holistic** in that the discipline is concerned with studying **the whole of the human condition: past, present and future**. Anthropology studies biology, society, history, language, and culture.
- Anthropology offers a unique **cross-cultural perspective** by constantly comparing the customs of one society with those of others.
- People share both society and culture.
- **Society** is organized life in groups, a feature that humans share with other animals.
- **Cultures** are traditions and customs, transmitted through learning, that govern the beliefs and behaviors of the people exposed to them.
- While culture is not biological, the ability to use it rests in hominid biology.

Adaptation, Variation, and Change

- Adaptation is the process by which organisms cope with environmental stresses.
- Human adaptation involves interaction between culture and biology to satisfy individual goals.
- Four types of human adaptation:
 - cultural (technological) adaptation
 - genetic adaptation
 - long-term physiological or developmental adaptation
 - immediate physiological adaptation

Four Subdisciplines of Anthropology

- Variation in "Time" (diachronic research): using information from contemporary groups to model changes that took place in the past, and using knowledge gained from past groups to understand what is likely to happen in the future (e.g. reconstructing past languages using principles based on modern ones).
- Variation in "Space" (synchronic research): comparing information collected from human societies existing at the same or roughly the same time, but from different geographic locations (e.g. the race concept in the US, Brazil, and Japan).
- Any conclusions about "human nature" must be pursued with a comparative, cross-cultural approach.

Cultural Forces and Human Biology

- Cultural traditions promote certain activities and abilities, discourage others, and set standards of physical well-being and attractiveness.
 - Participation and achievement in sports is determined by cultural factors, not racial ones.
 - In Brazilian culture, women should be soft, with big hips and buttocks, not big shoulders; since competitive swimmers tend to have big, strong, shoulders and firm bodies, competitive swimming is not very popular among Brazilian females.
 - In the US, there aren't many African-American swimmers or hockey players, not because of some biological reason, but because those sports aren't as culturally significant as football, basketball, baseball, and track.

Intelligence Tests

- There is no conclusive evidence for biologically based contrasts in intelligence between rich and poor, black and white, or men and women.
 - The best indicators of how any individual will perform on an intelligence test are environmental, such as educational, economic, and social background.
 - All standard tests are culture-bound and biased because they reflect the training and life experiences of those who develop and administer them.

Cultural Anthropology

- Cultural Anthropology combines ethnography and ethnology to study human societies and cultures for the purpose of explaining social and cultural similarities and differences.
- **Ethnography** produces an account (a book, an article, or a film) of a particular community, society, or culture based on information that is collected during fieldwork.
 - Generally, ethnographic fieldwork involves living in the community that is being studied for an extended period of time (e.g. 6 months to 2 years).
 - **Ethnographic fieldwork** tends to emphasize local behavior, beliefs, customs, social life, economic activities, politics, and religion, rather than developments at the national level.
 - Since cultures are not isolated, ethnographers must investigate the local, regional, national, and global systems of politics, economics, and information that expose villagers to external influences.

Cultural Anthropology

- Ethnology examines, interprets, analyzes, and compares the ethnographic data gathered in different societies to make generalizations about society and culture.
 - Ethnology uses ethnographic data to build models, test hypotheses, and create theories that enhance our understanding of how social and cultural systems work.
 - Ethnology works from the particular (ethnographic data) to the general (theory).

Cultural Anthropology

Comparison between Ethnography and Ethnology

ETHNOGRAPHY	ETHNOLOGY
requires fieldwork to collect data	draws upon data collected by a series of researchers
descriptive	synthetic
group/community specific	comparative/cross-cultural



Archaeological Anthropology



- Archaeological anthropology reconstructs, describes, and interprets past human behavior and cultural patterns through **material remains** (a.k.a as **material culture**).
- The material remains of a culture include artifacts (e.g. potsherds, jewelry, and tools), garbage, burials, and the remains of structures.
- Archaeologists use paleoecological studies to establish the ecological and subsistence parameters within which given group lived.

Archaeological Anthropology

- The archaeological record provides archaeologists the unique opportunity to look at changes in social complexity over thousands and tens of thousands of years (this kind of time depth is not accessible to ethnographers).
- Archaeology is not restricted to prehistoric societies.
 - Historical archaeology combines archaeological data and textual data to reconstruct historically known groups.
 - William Rathje's "garbology" project in Tucson, Arizona.

Biological Anthropology

- Biological, or physical, anthropology investigates human biological diversity across time and space.
- There are five special interests within biological anthropology:
 - paleoanthropology: human evolution as revealed by the fossil record
 - human genetics
 - human growth and development
 - human biological plasticity: the body's ability to change as it copes with stresses such as heat, cold, and altitude
 - primatology: the study of the biology, evolution, behavior, and social life of primates.
- Biological anthropology is multidisciplinary as it draws on biology, zoology, geology, anatomy, physiology, medicine, public health, osteology, and archaeology.

Linguistic Anthropology

- Linguistic anthropology is the study of language in its social and cultural context across space and time.
- Some linguistic anthropologists investigate universal features of language that may be linked to uniformities in the human brain.
- Historical linguists reconstruct ancient languages and study linguistic variation through time.

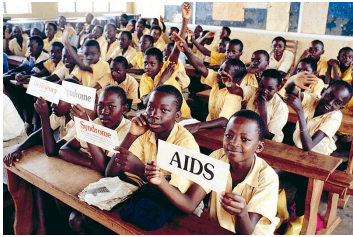
Theoretical/Academic Anthropology

- Theoretical/academic anthropology includes the four subfields discussed above (cultural, archaeological, biological, and linguistic anthropology).
 - Directed at collecting data to test hypotheses and models that were created to advance the field of anthropology.
 - Generally, theoretical/academic anthropology is carried out in academic institutions (e.g. universities and specialized research facilities).

Applied Anthropology

- Applied anthropology is the application of any of anthropological data, perspectives, theory, and techniques to identify, assess, and solve contemporary social problems.
 - Some standard subdivisions have developed in applied anthropology: medical anthropology, environmental anthropology, forensic anthropology, and development anthropology.
 - Applied anthropologists are generally employed by international development agencies, like the World Bank, United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the World Health Organization (WHO), and the United Nations.

Medical Anthropology



Medical anthropology studies health conditions from a cross-cultural perspective. In Uganda's Mwiri primary school children are taught about HIV.

Applied Anthropology

- Applied anthropologists assess the social and cultural dimensions of economic development.
- Development projects often fail when planners ignore the cultural dimensions of development.
- Applied anthropologists work with local communities to identify specific social conditions that will influence the failure or success of a development project.

Two Dimensions of Anthropology

The Four Subfields and Two Dimensions of Anthropology

GENERAL ANTHROPOLOGY	APPLIED ANTHROPOLOGY
Cultural Anthropology	Medical Anthropology
Archaeological Anthropology	Cultural Resource Management (CRM)
Biological or Physical Anthropology	Forensic Anthropology
Linguistic Anthropology	Non-government Organizations (NGOs)
