



# **Social and Cultural Anthropology: A Very Short Introduction**

*John Monaghan , Peter Just*

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"If you want to know what anthropology is, look at what anthropologists do," write the authors of *Social and Cultural Anthropology: A Very Short Introduction*. This engaging overview of the field combines an accessible account of some of the discipline's guiding principles and methodology with abundant examples and illustrations of anthropologists at work.

Peter Just and John Monaghan begin by discussing anthropology's most important contributions to modern thought: its investigation of culture as a distinctively human characteristic, its doctrine of cultural relativism, and its methodology of fieldwork and ethnography. Drawing on examples from their own fieldwork in Indonesia and Mesoamerica, they examine specific ways in which social and cultural anthropology have advanced our understanding of human society and culture. Including an assessment of anthropology's present position, and a look forward to its likely future, *Social and Cultural Anthropology* will make fascinating reading for anyone curious about this social science.

About the Series: Combining authority with wit, accessibility, and style, *Very Short Introductions* offer an introduction to some of life's most interesting topics. Written by experts for the newcomer, they demonstrate the finest contemporary thinking about the central problems and issues in hundreds of key topics, from philosophy to Freud, quantum theory to Islam.

## Social and Cultural Anthropology: A Very Short Introduction Details

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# **From Reader Review Social and Cultural Anthropology: A Very Short Introduction for online ebook**

## **David Roberts says**

The book I read to research this post was Social & Cultural Anthropology A Very Short Introduction by John Monaghan which is a very good book which I bought from kindle. This book looks at various cultures and contrasts them and looks at what they have in common. In particular they try to look at a culture for what it is and not pass judgement on whether it's better or worse than another. In a lot of cultures we have seen a kind of westernisation as they have often converted to either islam or christianity and members have tried to get jobs and get modern luxuries. In many places we have seen the laying on of electricity and water supplies etc. One group in particular they study is a group in Indonesia who are quite close knit and have refused to be inducted into this westernisation mostly. They don't have utilities like electricity and stick with their religion and laws. They live in teak houses on stilts in a remote part of Bali & view our culture with great suspicion. Some members have converted to christianity and islam and got jobs but are seen as outcasts. They have their own laws and traditions and their own kind of medicine. The witch doctors sort a lot of their problems out. There was one case where one man threatened a lady because she was betrothed to someone else and she falsely accused him of hitting her and although everyone knew he hadn't he was fined and forced to beg her forgiveness to keep with tradition. He had broken their etiquette in a very serious way. In many cultures there has also been problems with western diseases and even enslavement as they have been integrated with the west as well.

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## **Donna says**

Recommended reading for anybody with an interest in or embarking on a course in social anthropology. A rather nice introduction into the world of social and cultural anthropology. What was particularly great about this little book was the outlining of the historical pathway of anthropology as a discipline and its identification of the dilemmas that have cropped up therein. Ethical considerations that will always arise are covered; an absolute minefield without a doubt. But the importance of being and of observing is still of high regard - despite the difficulty of being able to truly relate to others and to other cultures, whatever the culture may be, putting aside one's own biases and judgement. Some interesting subjects appear in this book and some brilliant references for those of you who wish to read on.

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## **Takumi says**

Having prepared for my specialization of anthropology, I found that I'd never read an introductory book of it written in English. So I chose this one for the first step.

This short introduction shows how anthropologists think rather than what anthropology is. It refers to almost all major topics with abundant examples some of which are from authors' own fields. If you want the overview of the history of anthropology, this might be inadequate. But still, a well-written nice introduction for beginners.

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## Damir says

A short, clear, intelligent introduction to the discipline of anthropology.

Usually introductions are compiled as textbooks serving the reader with definitions and typologies of the basic scientific language.

This short book however, approaches some of the most interesting study subjects of anthropology by offering an example from the career of the writers, and then deconstructing it through several different scientific theories and viewpoints.

Easy to read and easy to understand, a great starting point for anyone seriously interested in cultural anthropology and its many facets.

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## Petra X says

Even though I've read quite a few anthropology books, this was still interesting. One thing I learned was that the main tool of anthropologists was long ~~holidays in exotic locations~~ periods spent in hard conditions with ~~interesting people who might get to be real friends~~ people of a very different and often difficult culture. The main tool of sociologists is .. the survey and statistics. Well I know which one I'd rather be.

I lived up the Amazon with Caboclo Indians for three months at one point. Do you think someone might fund me to go and live with them for a couple of years? They have such lovely lives and I could do with a good long holiday. I'm not bad at writing and I'm ok at statistics too, so I'm sure I could come up with a report at the end of it. Now how to get that grant!

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## Deb says

Very short, clear, intelligent introduction to anthropology. I would recommend it to anyone taking an anthropology course, and to any teacher looking for a brief and affordable introduction to use in a class. This book only costs \$10.00 from the publisher, compare to those huge \$80 to \$100 textbooks. For its size -- 160 small pages or so -- it contains a lot, including use of key theories (Durkheim, etc.), the cultural vs. social anthropology distinction, what distinguishes anthropology from sociology (these days, not much), and interesting examples from the authors' fieldwork in Oaxaca and Sumba, Indonesia.

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## Hamid e Naser says

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## Foad says



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## **Joe Iacovino says**

I read this in preparation for my anthropology class and it served me well. It is interesting, informative, and even funny. This is a well-written book for those who need to get their arms around the basics on anthropology.

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## **Shauna says**

A great intro to the breadth of anthropology outlining its development as a discipline, its fascinations, its dilemmas...written from a very humanistic perspective with good examples from the author's own work.

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## **Robert Day says**

People are strange when you're a stranger  
Faces look ugly when you're alone  
Women seem wicked when you're unwanted  
Streets are uneven when you're down

When you're strange  
Faces come out of the rain  
When you're strange  
No one remembers your name  
When you're strange  
When you're strange  
When you're strange  
(The Doors)

We're all strangers somewhere. No matter how much we consider ourselves to be 'children of the world', there's always going to be someone that thinks of us as strangers, complete with eerie mood music.

To me, anthropology is about these strangers - which means that it is about each and every one of us.

You might have the impression that anthropology is all about studying hitherto undiscovered people living in jungles or remote valleys - cut off from the world - and it is! But there's more.

You remember that movie - Crocodile Dundee, where this guy from the Australian Outback visits New York and has all kind of adventures and strange experiences with the 'natives' of New York? Well - the Outback guy is pretty much doing what an anthropologist would.

In fact, this is happening all the time. As well as 'advanced' civilisations monitoring, cataloguing and preserving information about 'primitive' civilisations, the opposite is happening too.

Judging by the rate at which we are using this planet up, we could do with being studied and preserved for

posterity.

Perhaps a bit of pickling wouldn't go amiss too.

I couldn't really get into this book. It seemed to be written by old guys - people that learned their trade from people that studied their trade in the 1950s. It could have done with a fresher eye really.

A better approach would be to explain anthropology in terms of Science Fiction movies. All those Alien and Predator movies would be ideal to start with, not to mention Avatar and ... and pretty much any Sci-Fi movie really.

In fact - when I think about it - aren't all movies about strangeness?

Let's take a random movie - 'Pretty Woman' - one culture meets another culture and they study and ultimately save each other - that's the essence of anthropology really I guess.

Yeah - skip this book and go to the movies instead.

As I sit here and tipperty-tap my fingers on the keyboard, I'm thinking about the new Terminator movie - Arnie's going to be back!

Yay for strangeness.

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## Ahmad Sharabiani says

Social and Cultural Anthropology: A Very Short Introduction (Very Short Introductions #15), John Monaghan, Peter Just

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## Saied Davoodi says

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