

# MAKING SENSE OF ANTHROPOLOGY

## Do you know what cultural anthropology is?

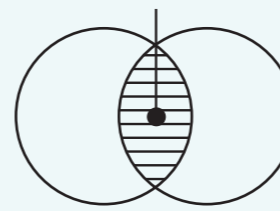
----- In a survey 60 people were asked what anthropology is. 9 out of 10 people think they know what it is, 8 out of 10 say they are able to explain it but only 3 give an almost correct answer

Most people do not really know what anthropology is. And even if they think they know, they are mostly wrong. Let us change that!

What is anthropology? How does an anthropologist work? How does anthropology position itself in the field of science?

Anthropology is about how people make sense of their worlds. But let us look at how we make sense of cultural anthropology!

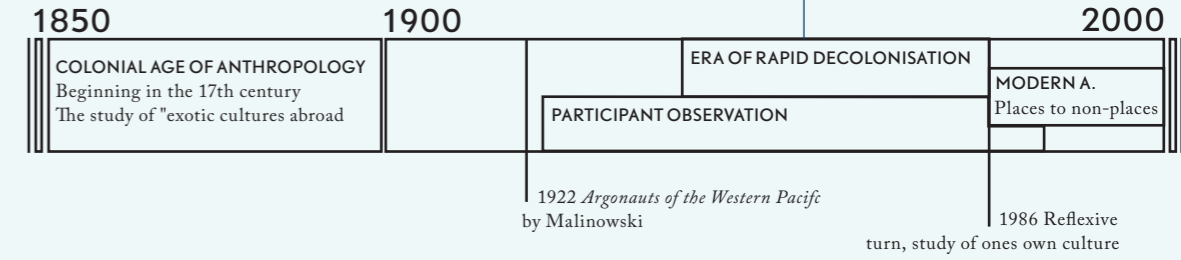
### ANTHROPOLOGY



**SCIENCES**  
Study of the world through observation and comparison.

**HUMANITIES**  
Descriptive and participant observation of human culture.

### HISTORY



The general term "anthropology": originates from the Greek *anthrōpos* and *logia* meaning the "study of mankind"; it developed into four fields - sociocultural, biological, archeological and linguistic anthropology.

## WHAT IS CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY?

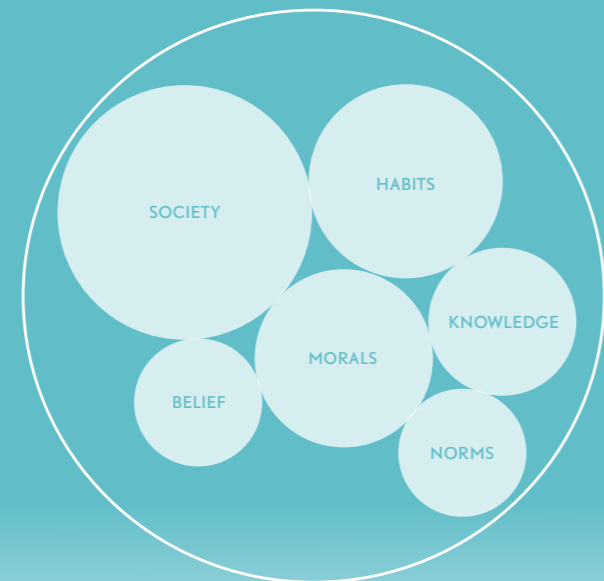
Cultural anthropology is a branch of anthropology focused on the study of cultural variation among humans, the study of living societies.

Humanity has more facets than just where we came from, we have to consider the whole original question of why people today differ worldwide. Why do many Asian folks eat with chopsticks but others use a fork and knife? Why is it okay for a man to have several wives in one culture but not in another culture? Unfortunately, the common sense answers are rarely right - chopsticks aren't some archaic precursor to fork and knife, they're just a different way of getting food into the mouth.

## WHAT IS CULTURE?

"...that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society". - E.B. Tylor, 1871

There is no absolute definition, but this is the one most used and accepted in different fields of study.



## THE RICH POINT



## TWO POSITIONS OF AN ANTHROPOLOGIST

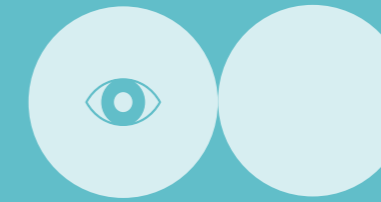
Cultural anthropologists gather their ethnographic data, information about life in and on societies, in mainly two different ways.

### 1. PARTICIPANT OBSERVER



An *emic* perspective is the insider's point of view. This is the major technique and includes taking part in the everyday life of the people.

### 2. OUTSIDE OBSERVER



An *etic* perspective refers to a more distant, analytical orientation to experience. Where the observer is an objective element.

### RICH POINTS

Are usually out of the ordinary events that open up the possibility for more research possibilities for the anthropologist within a culture that was closed or reserved to those seen as outsiders. Rich points can also be mental breakthroughs of the anthropologist. Concept developed by Micheal Agar in 1996.

## THE ETHNOGRAPHY

### ETH-NO-GRAPHY

*noun*

a. qualitative research project where the intent is to provide a detailed, in-depth description.  
b. "thick description" — a term attributed to the anthropologist Clifford Geertz.

*origin*

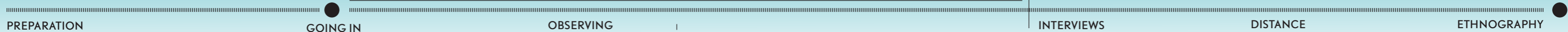
ETHNO-  
indicating a group of people or culture

-GRAPHY  
a. a process of writing, representing  
b. a product

"Its function, if you want to call it that, is interpretive: it is a Balinese reading of Balinese experience, a story they tell themselves about themselves."

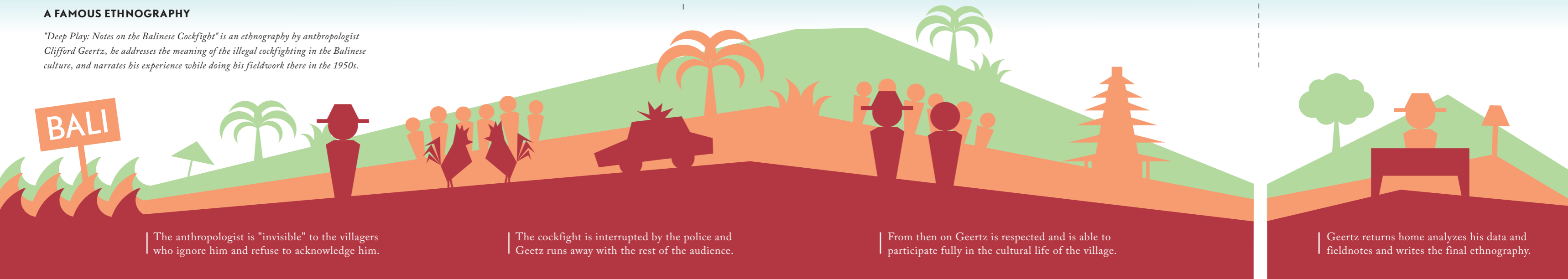
- the ethnography is a translation for non-Balinese people to understand.

## STEPS OF AN ANTHROPOLOGIST



### A FAMOUS ETHNOGRAPHY

"Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight" is an ethnography by anthropologist Clifford Geertz, he addresses the meaning of the illegal cockfighting in the Balinese culture, and narrates his experience while doing his fieldwork there in the 1950s.



The anthropologist is "invisible" to the villagers who ignore him and refuse to acknowledge him.

The cockfight is interrupted by the police and Geertz runs away with the rest of the audience.

From then on Geertz is respected and is able to participate fully in the cultural life of the village.

Geertz returns home analyzes his data and fieldnotes and writes the final ethnography.