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What is anthropology?

Eriksen, Thomas Hylland

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Abstrak

Leading anthropologist Thomas Hylland Eriksen shows how anthropology is a revolutionary way of thinking about the human world. Perfect for students, but also for those who have never encountered anthropology before, this book explores the key issues in an exciting and innovative way. Eriksen explains how to see the world from below and from within ? emphasising the importance of adopting an insider's perspective. He reveals how seemingly enormous cultural differences actually conceal the deep unity of humanity. Lucid and accessible, What is Anthropology? draws examples from current affairs as well as anthropological studies. The first section presents the history of anthropology, its unique research methods and some of its central concepts, such as society, culture and translation. Eriksen shows how anthropology helps to shape contemporary thinking and why it is inherently radical. In the second section he discusses core issues in greater detail. Reciprocity, or exchange, or gift-giving, is shown to be the basis of every society. Eriksen examines kinship in traditional societies, and shows why it remains important in complex ones. He argues nature is partly cultural, and explores anthropological views on human nature as well as ecology. He delves into cultural relativism and the problem of understanding others. Finally, he describes the paradoxes of identity ? ethnic, national, religious or postmodern, as the case may be.