



# The 30 Essential Books in Anthropology

Allegra  
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At the end of 2015 Allegra launched a virtual survey among junior and senior anthropologists in order to select **the 30 essential books in anthropology**, a list of unmissable readings that have significantly influenced humanities and social sciences debates as well as popular knowledge and Western thought more broadly.

Now a new debate has picked up around the list in the social media. Our Allies



are sharing tips for books that should be included in the list via [our Twitter account](#).

*The list is also awakening justified criticism: it is very white and male, and barely incorporates any works after the post modern turn including works by indigenous anthropologists, inter-sectionalism and feminist critiques. How could that happen, at Allegra, with our determined criticism both of the [ethnocentrism of our field](#) as well as [its male dominance](#)?!*

It is evident that with this list we are onto a much broader debate of the state of our discipline, of the kind of works - authored by whom - that we consider relevant. This is a debate that we simply must continue! To get things going we have added reader suggestions to the end of this list. Which ones do you think should be added?

Below are the results of our original survey/game in 2015. ENJOY!

1. Geertz, C., 1973, *The Interpretation of Cultures*. Basic Books.
2. Lévi-Strauss, C., 1955, *Tristes tropiques*. Librairie Plon.
3. Malinowski, B., 1922, *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*. E.P. Dutton.
4. Mauss, M., 1950[1923-24], *Essai sur le don. Forme et raison de l'échange dans les sociétés archaïques*. Presses Universitaires de France.
5. Appadurai, A., 1996, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. University of Minnesota Press.
6. Boas, F., 1911, *The Mind of Primitive Man*. MacMillan.
7. Tylor, E.B., 1871, *Primitive Culture*. John Murray.
8. Mead, M., 1928, *Coming of Age in Samoa*. William Morrow and Co.
9. Evans-Pritchard, E.E., 1937, *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande*. Oxford University Press.
10. Douglas, M., 1966, *Purity and Danger*. Routledge & Kegan Paul.
11. Strathern, M., 1988, *The Gender of the Gift: Problems with Women and*



- Problems with Society in Melanesia*. University of California Press.
12. Lévi-Strauss, C., 1947, *Les Structures élémentaires de la parenté*. Mouton.
  13. Morgan, L.H., 1877, *Ancient Society*. MacMillan.
  14. Das, V., 2006, *Life and Words. Violence and the Descent into the Ordinary*. University of California Press.
  15. Abu-Lughod, L., 1986, *Veiled Sentiments. Honor and Poetry in a Bedouin Society*. University of California Press.
  16. Barth, F., ed., 1969, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries. The Social Organization of Culture Difference*. Waveland Press.
  17. Benedict, R., 1934, *Patterns of Culture*. Houghton Mifflin.
  18. Bateson, G., 1936, *Naven. A Survey of the Problems Suggested by a Composite Picture of the Culture of a New Guinea Tribe Drawn from Three Points of View*. Stanford University Press.
  19. Favret-Saada, J., 1977, *Les mots, la mort, les sorts: la sorcellerie dans le bocage*. Gallimard.
  20. Wolf, E.R., 1982, *Europe and the People without History*. University of California Press.
  21. Shostak, M., 1981, *Nisa: The Life and Words of a !Kung Woman*. Harvard University Press.
  22. Girard, R., 1972, *La violence et le sacré*. Grasset.
  23. Clifford, J., Marcus, G.E., eds., 1986, *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*. University of California Press.
  24. Dumont, L., 1966, *Homo Hierarchicus. Essai sur le système des castes*. Gallimard.
  25. Scheper-Hughes, N., 1992, *Death without Weeping. The Violence of Everyday Life in Brazil*. University of California Press.
  26. Sahlins, M., 1972, *Stone Age Economics*. Aldine de Gruyter.
  27. Bloch, M.E.F., 1998, *How We Think They Think: Anthropological Approaches to Cognition, Memory, and Literacy*. Westview Press.
  28. Nader, L., 1990, *Harmony Ideology. Justice and Control in a Zapotec Mountain Village*. Stanford University Press.



29. Tambiah, S.J., 1990, *Magic, Science, Religion and the Scope of Rationality*. Cambridge University Press.
30. Gluckman, M., 1955, *The Judicial Process among the Barotse of Northern Rhodesia (Zambia)*. Manchester University Press.

We reviewed reader comments and criticisms in our [Top 30 Revisited Post](#), and compiled all reader suggestions into a [70 book list](#).

Readers suggestions via [Allegra's Twitter](#) (March 2017)

\*Anna Tsing, 2005, *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection*, Princeton University Press.

\*Annelise Riles, 2001, *Network Inside Out*, Ann Arbor.

\*Kathleen Stewart, 1996, *A Space on the Side of the Road: Cultural Poetics in an "Other" America*. Princeton University Press.

\*Nancy D. Munn, 1992, *The Fame of Gawa: A Symbolic Study of Value Transformation in a Massim Society*. Duke University Press.

\*Erik Muggler, 2001, *Age of Wild Ghosts*. University of California Press.

\*Edward Said, 1979, *Orientalism*, Vintage Books.

\*Roy Wagner, 1975, *The invention of culture*. University of Chicago Press.

\*Esther Newton, 1979, *Mother Camp: Female Impersonators in America*, University of Chicago Press.

\*Kath Weston, 1997, *Families We Choose: Lesbians, Gays, Kinship*, Columbia University Press.





\*Michelle Zimbalist Rosaldo & Louise Lamphere (Eds), 1974, *Woman, Culture, and Society*, Stanford University Press.

\*Ernesto de Martino, 2005, *The Land of Remorse: A Study of Southern Italian Tarantism*, Free Association Books.



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