

当代人类学家之一：Clifford Geertz

来自Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Life

Clifford Geertz was born in San Francisco, California on August 23, 1926. After service in the U.S. Navy in World War II (1943 - 45), Geertz received his B.A. in Philosophy from Antioch College in Yellow Springs, OH in 1950, and his Ph.D. at Harvard University in 1956, where he had studied social anthropology in the Department of Social Relations. He taught or held fellowships at a number of schools before joining the anthropology staff of the University of Chicago (1960 - 70). He then became professor of social science at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton from 1970 to 2000, then emeritus professor. Geertz received Honorary Doctorate Degrees from some fifteen colleges and universities, including Harvard University, the University of Chicago and the University of Cambridge. He was married first to the anthropologist Hildred Geertz. After their divorce he married Karen Blu, also an anthropologist. Clifford Geertz died of complications following heart surgery on October 30, 2006.

Thought and works

At the University of Chicago, Geertz became a "champion of symbolic anthropology", which gives prime attention to the role of thought ("symbols") in society. Symbols guide action. Culture, outlined by Geertz in his book *The Interpretation of Cultures* (1973), is "a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which people communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life" (1973:89). The function of culture is to impose meaning on the world and make it understandable. The role of anthropologists is to try (though complete success is not possible) to interpret the guiding symbols of each culture (see thick description). His oft-cited essay, "Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight," included in *The Interpretation of Cultures*, is the classic example of thick description at work. Geertz was quite innovative in this regard, as he was one of the first to see that the insights provided by common language philosophy and literary analysis could have major explanatory force in the social sciences.

He conducted extensive ethnographical research in Southeast Asia and North Africa. He also contributed to social and cultural theory and is still very influential in turning anthropology toward a concern with the frames of meaning within which various peoples live out their lives. He worked on religion, most particularly Islam, on bazaar trade, on economic development, on traditional political structures, and on village and family life. At the time of his death he was working on the general question of ethnic diversity and its implications in the modern world.

Geertz's career worked through, over time, a variety of phases and schools of thought. Gradually he came to see the limitations of each, and moved on. His final position was to take a strong view about objective reality of the complex social system of order. But he also recognised the difficulties that research has in getting at an adequate description of that objective reality: caused by the fact that people tell ethnographers what they believe to be their own motivations, but those people's actions then often seem to contradict their statements to the researcher. This effect is partly due to: the problems that people have in verbalising aspects of their life that they usually take for granted; partly due to how ethnographers structure their research approaches and frameworks; and partly due to the inherent complexity of the social order.

Harvard professor and literary scholar Stephen Greenblatt identifies him as a strong influence, and Geertz acknowledged Greenblatt as a faithful interpreter of his work.

Interlocutors

Stephen Greenblatt
Robert Darnton

See also

Clifford Geertz's theory of religion

Major publications

The Religion of Java (1960), University Of Chicago Press 1976 paperback: ISBN 0-226-28510-3
Peddlers and Princes: Social Development and Economic Change in Two Indonesian Towns (1963), University Of Chicago Press



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Agricultural Involution: the process of ecological change in Indonesia (1964)

Islam Observed, Religious Development in Morocco and Indonesia (1968), University Of Chicago Press 1971 paperback: ISBN 0-226-28511-1

The Interpretation of Cultures (1973), Basic Books 2000 paperback: ISBN 0-465-09719-7

Kinship in Bali (1975) coauthor: Hildred Geertz, University Of Chicago Press 1978 paperback: ISBN 0-226-28516-2

Negara: The Theatre State in Nineteenth Century Bali (1980), Princeton University Press 2001 paperback: ISBN 0-691-00778-0

Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology (1983), Basic Books 2000 paperback: ISBN 0-465-04162-0

"Anti-Anti-Relativism" (1984), American Anthropologist, vol. 86, no. 2, pp. 263 - 278.

Works and Lives: The Anthropologist As Author (1988), Stanford University Press 1990 paperback: ISBN 0-8047-1747-8

After the Fact: Two Countries, Four Decades, One Anthropologist, Harvard University Press 1995 paperback: ISBN 0-674-00872-3

Available Light: Anthropological Reflections on Philosophical Topics, Princeton University Press 2000 paperback: ISBN 0-691-08956-6

"An inconstant profession: The anthropological life in interesting times" (2002), Annual Review of Anthropology, vol. 31, pp. 1 - 19 Viewable at hypergeertz.jku.at

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Geertz, C., Shweder, R. A., & Good, B. (2005). Clifford Geertz by his colleagues. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

University of Chicago, & Geertz, C. (1963). Old societies and new States; the quest for modernity in Asia and Africa.

[New York]: Free Press of Glencoe.

External links

[Interview of Clifford Geertz\(video\)](#)

[Big Ideas: Clifford Geertz](#)

[Clifford Geertz: A Life of Learning \(Charles Homer Haskins Lecture for 1999\)](#)

[Obituary at Institute for Advanced Study](#)

[HyperGeertz WorldCatalogue extended bibliography](#)

[A short biography of Geertz from Richard Wilk's website](#)

[Hyper Geertz World Catalogue HTM](#)

[Clifford Geertz, Cultural Anthropologist, Is Dead at 80 by Andrew L. Yarrow published on November 1, 2006 in the New York Times](#)

[New Academic and Deep Book about the Work of Clifford Geertz: Nature, symbol and culture in Clifford Geertz, by Enrique Anrubia: printed in Spain, 2008](#)

[Geertz author page and archive from The New York Review of Books](#)

[Interview of Clifford Geertz by Alan Macfarlane 5th May 2004 \(film\). Linked to Frazer Lecture 2004 \(sound only\)](#)

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