You have booked your trip to Hong Kong using e-fares to find the most economical package. The fare is particularly inexpensive because fears of SARS and terrorism have made airlines desperate. Before you leave home, you surf the Hong Kong International Airport website and follow the links on the pop-up. Special links have been created to help you recognize SARS, and be prepared to minimize exposure. Links go to security pages informing passengers that they will be given plastic bags for their mobile phones, keys, coins and lighters to speed up the security process. The website even instructs the passengers that this will take place immediately after they leave the Immigration area and enter the security checking areas. You take the virtual tour of the airport so you will know how to proceed when you land. You do not really need to do this tour—one airport is much like another. You are going to Kowloon, to stay in the YMCA facility there. When you get off the ferry you pass the gauntlet of shops and pause at the McDonald’s to grab a burger and fries. Welcome to the emerging global culture. Hong Kong, London, Los Angeles are much the same experience. Or are they?

If you unpack the experience outlined above and start to examine it, you will begin to discover that local cultures intertwine with the emerging global culture in ways both subtle and profound. You discover that the traveler’s world is viewed quite differently by the taxi driver who takes her to her hotel. The standardization of the airports, YMCA’s and McDonald’s are not complete, but reflect the values, expectations and realities of the local consumers, as well as the tourists. Hong Kong is itself struggling with its own identity, not quite Chinese as Beijing sees it, but not separate either. Each global organization, such as the McDonald’s restaurant, is embedded in a web of economic, social and political relationships, the forerunners of which extend back into centuries.

This book of readings is designed to provoke your thinking so that you will not be able to take that airplane trip, or that burger, for granted again. You will reflect on the juxtaposition of historic, social and political forces that has shaped your experience. You will see that each object you hold, each bite you eat, each relationship, while shaped by global developments, intertwines with local understandings, frameworks and experiences. To unravel these linkages we need to develop a toolkit that permits us to take seemingly ordinary experiences and expose the global connections. Intrinsic to this endeavor are three perspectives. First, we
use the anthropological imagination, struggling to document and understand emerging cultures, particularly ones that challenge our own comfortable assumptions. We need to be able to grasp different points of view, which are not usually part of our experience of daily life. This includes an understanding that globalization viewed from above often looks very different from globalization as seen from below. A Wall Street banker and a Latin American peasant will have very different perceptions and experiences with globalization; the question of power dramatically shapes attitudes, ideas and responses to global transformations. Second, we use a systems approach to track processes in time and space. Systems evolve; they change through time. Thus we can anticipate what may happen, at least enough to plan and apply that anthropological and systemic knowledge to the real world. This futures approach is the third perspective integral to the book. Together, the three perspectives—anthropological, systemic and anticipatory—inform how we understand globalization.

We begin the book by giving you a series of readings directly related to these three perspectives. "Ethnicity and Global Diversity" by Ann Kelleher and Laura Klein introduces critical anthropological concepts necessary to understanding emerging global cultures. Draper Kauffman's "Systems One" outlines principles that are basic to all living systems, including social ones. Some of the principles are obvious, others are counterintuitive. "The Tragedy of the Commons," by ecologist Garrett Hardin, is a classic example of how decisions may seem rational to individuals, but can have unanticipated consequences for the system as a whole. Peter Bishop's "Thinking Like a Futurist," takes us the next step—how to apply systems thinking to forecasting and planning.

Outfitted with these conceptual tools you are ready to grapple with the central concept of this book—the formation and structure of globalization. Anthropologist Ray Scupin examines "Contemporary Global Trends" while Richard Robbins takes a detailed historical look at the emergence of the global political economy in "The Rise of the Merchant, Industrialist, and Capital Controller." Nobel prize-winning economist Joseph E. Stiglitz, critiques the organizations that structure economic globalization in "The Promise of Global Institutions." "Jihad vs. McWorld," by Benjamin R. Barber, contrasts the reasoning behind corporate homogenization, with the worldviews of those who resist it.

However, the premise of this book is that macro-level examinations of globalization tell only part of the story. The rest of the tale rests in the experiences of people embedded in their own cultures, lives and values. To illustrate this concept we offer up the familiar world of McDonald's fast food, but as it is experienced in East Asia. The reading, "Transnationalism, Localization, and Fast Foods in East Asia," excerpted from James Watson's book, Golden Arches East, toy with our assumptions about the familiar and the exotic.

Conventional anthropological wisdom tells us that perspective matters, and that the same phenomenon can be viewed quite distinctly by people who are positioned differently within society. Dinesh D'Souza's "Two Cheers for Colonialism" looks at the legacy of colonialism quite differently than the following readings. Jamaica Kincaid in "On Seeing England for the First Time," speaks to the legacy that comes when viewing empire, not as an empire-builder, but as the once-colonized. David Graeber questions "What Real Globalization Would Mean," if it were seen from points of view that are not usually articulated by powerful decision-makers of global economic institutions.
The political economy of the emerging global cultures is also experienced quite differently in particular settings. Several case studies illuminate the interface between economic practices and cultural experience. "Across Space and through Time: Tomatl Meets the Corporate Tomato," by Deborah Barndt takes the humble tomato through its natural and corporate history, illustrating unguessed global connections. The classic reading, "The ‘Maquila’ Women," by Patricia Fernandez-Kelly, suggests the experiences of the Mexican women working on the global assembly line. In her "Transportation Innovation and Social Complexity among Maritime Hunter-Gatherer Societies," Jeanne E. Arnold, an archaeologist, explores an economic world quite different from the previous examples, that of California’s native Chumash people. Katherine Milton similarly illustrates the economic principles of a small-scale society in the Amazon. She contrasts the values and practices she observed with the ones these people are encountering in the wider economic sphere. "Civilization and Its Discontents" questions the assumption that such culture contact is inherently beneficial to the indigenous peoples.

Trade, travel, technology, tourism, terrorism—all of these aspects of the emerging global culture necessitate the movement of people, ideas, and material culture across the planet. The Economist’s “Longest Journey: A Survey of Migration” tracks the movement of peoples around the world and considers the systemic impacts. George and Sharon Bohn Gmelch puts human faces on these forces in an excerpt from an ethnography on the Caribbean island of Barbados, "The Global Village: Television, Tourism and Travel.” Terrence Turner tells us about “The Kayapo Resistance.” In this reading an indigenous Amazonian group constructs a new identity for itself as it allies with global environmental movements to “preserve” its own culture. Finally, in an era of worldwide interconnections, terror becomes part of the kaleidoscope of emerging global cultures. We revisit Barber’s work in “Democracy and Terror in the Era of Jihad vs. McWorld.” “First, Know the Enemy, Then Act,” by Dale Eickelman explores this world, one which political terrorism is “more diverse, free-wheeling, transnational.” Population movements, trade, and technology intertwine to support the creation of global movements.

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