



# Anthropological Futures (Experimental Futures)

*Michael M. J. Fischer*

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In *Anthropological Futures*, Michael M. J. Fischer explores the uses of anthropology as a mode of philosophical inquiry, an evolving academic discipline, and a means for explicating the complex and shifting interweaving of human bonds and social interactions on a global level. Through linked essays, which are both speculative and experimental, Fischer seeks to break new ground for anthropology by illuminating the field's broad analytical capacity and its attentiveness to emergent cultural systems.

Fischer is particularly concerned with cultural anthropology's interactions with science studies, and throughout the book he investigates how emerging knowledge formations in molecular biology, environmental studies, computer science, and bioengineering are transforming some of anthropology's key concepts including nature, culture, personhood, and the body. In an essay on culture, he uses the science studies paradigm of "experimental systems" to consider how the social scientific notion of culture has evolved as an analytical tool since the nineteenth century. Charting anthropology's role in understanding and analyzing the production of knowledge within the sciences since the 1990s, he highlights anthropology's aptitude for tracing the transnational collaborations and multisited networks that constitute contemporary scientific practice. Fischer investigates changing ideas about cultural inscription on the human body in a world where genetic engineering, robotics, and cybernetics are constantly redefining our understanding of biology. In the final essay, Fischer turns to Kant's philosophical anthropology to reassess the object of study for contemporary anthropology and to reassert the field's primacy for answering the largest questions about human beings, societies, culture, and our interactions with the world around us. In *Anthropological Futures*, Fischer continues to advance what Clifford Geertz, in reviewing Fischer's earlier book *Emergent Forms of Life and the Anthropological Voice*, called "a broad new agenda for cultural description and political critique."

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