

Culture

- What is Culture?
 - Culture: the ways of thinking, the ways of acting, and the material objects that together form a people's way of life
 - Two Types of Cultures: Non-Material Culture: includes ideas created by members of society. Material Culture: refers to physical things
 - Society: Refers to people who interact in a defined territory and share a culture. Neither society nor culture could exist without the other
 - Culture Shock: personal disorientation when experiencing an unfamiliar way of life
- Culture and Human Intelligence
 - Animal behavior is determined by instinct: biological programming over which each species has no control
 - History took a crucial turn with the appearance of **primates**
 - Stone Age achievements: made culture that primary strategy for survival
 - Homo Sapiens: Latin for "Intelligent Person"
 - Modern Homo Sapiens: developed culture rapidly, used wide range of tools and cave art
 - 12,000 years ago, founding of permanent settlements, creation of specialized occupations. New survival scheme: fashioning the natural environment for our purposes
- How Many Cultures?
 - 300 languages spoken in America
 - almost 7,000 languages globally
- The Elements of Culture
 - Symbols: anything that carries a particular meaning recognized by people who share a culture
 - Language: a system of symbols that allows people to communicate with one another
 - key to **cultural transmission**: the process by which one generation passes culture to the next generation
 - Does language shape reality?
 - Edward Sapir and Benjamin Whorf: each language has its own distinct symbols that serve as the building blocks of reality.
 - All languages connect symbols with distinct emotions
 - Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis: People see and understand the world through the cultural lens of language. (evidence does not support this)
 - Values and Beliefs
 - Values: culturally defined standards that people use to decide what is desirable, good and beautiful, serve as broad guidelines for social living
 - Beliefs: specific statements that people hold to be true
 - Values: often in harmony, sometimes in conflict
 - value conflicts cause strain, often leads to awkward balancing acts in our beliefs, one value is more important than another
 - Emerging values: Us has always had an emphasis on hard work, now placed increasing importance on leisure
 - Values vary from culture to culture
 - Lower-income nations: value survival
 - Higher-income nations: value individualism and self-expression
 - Norms: rules and expectations by which a society guides the behavior of its members
 - people respond to each other with **sanctions**: rewards or punishments that encourage conformity to cultural norms
 - Two Types of Norms: **Mores**: norms that are widely observed and have great moral significance, certain mores include taboos. Folkways: norms for routine

or casual interaction, people pay less attention to folkways

- Ideal and Real Culture
 - Ideal Culture: social patterns mandated by cultural values and norms
 - Real Culture: actual social patterns that only approximate cultural expectations
- Technology and Culture
 - Artifacts: Physical human creations
 - Society's artifacts partly reflect underlying cultural values
 - Material culture reflects a society's level of **technology**: knowledge that people use to make a way of life in their surroundings
 - Lenski "A society's level of technology is crucial in determining what cultural ideas and artifacts emerge or are even possible"
- Sociocultural evolution: The historical changes in culture brought about by new technology. Four levels:
 - 1. Hunting and Gathering: the use of simple tools to hunt animals and gather vegetation for food
 - 2. Horticulture and Pastoralism. Horticulture: The use of hand tools to raise crops. Pastoralism: The domestication of animals. (More unequal roles for men and women)
 - 3. Agriculture: Large scale cultivation using plows harnessed to animals or machines. Large food surpluses, specialized in their work, brought about a dramatic increase in social equality
 - 4. Industry: The production of goods using advanced sources of energy to drive large machinery. Industrialization pushed aside traditional cultural values, schooling, reduce economic inequality and weaken human community
 - Postindustrial Information Technology: many industrial societies have entered a post-industrial era. New information technology. centers on computers and other electronic devices. More symbolic culture
- Cultural Diversity
 - Japan: Historical isolation has led to the most *monocultural* of all high-income countries
 - USA: centuries of heavy immigration has led to the most *multicultural* of all high income countries
- High Culture and Popular Culture
 - High Culture: refers to cultural patterns that distinguished of a society's elite
 - Popular Culture: describes cultural patterns that are widespread among a society's population
- Subculture: Cultural patterns that set apart some segment of a society's population
- Multiculturalism: a perspective recognizing the cultural diversity of the United States and promoting respect and equal standing for all cultural traditions
 - Eurocentrism: the dominance of European (especially English) cultural patterns
 - Afrocentrism: emphasizing and promoting African cultural patterns
 - Criticisms: encourages divisiveness rather than unity, focusing only on an Afrocentric curriculum might deny children important knowledge and skills. Global war on terror spotlighted multiculturalism: defense of values and a way of life.
- Counterculture: cultural patterns that strongly oppose those widely accepted within a society, favor a collective and cooperative lifestyle, still flourishing
- Cultural Change: change in one dimension of a cultural system usually sparks changes in others (technology)
 - Cultural Integration: the close relationship among various elements of a cultural system
 - Cultural Lag: the fact that some cultural elements change more quickly than others, disrupting a cultural system

- Changes set in motion in three ways: Invention: the process of creating new cultural elements. Discovery: recognizing and better understanding something already in existence. Diffusion: the spread of objects or ideas from one society to another
- Ethnocentrism and Cultural Relativism
 - Ethnocentrism: the practice of judging another culture by the standards of one's own culture
 - Cultural Relativism: the practice of judging a culture by its own standards. alternative to ethnocentrism, requires openness to unfamiliar values and norms
- A Global Culture?
 - global economy: the flow of goods
 - global communication: the flow of information
 - global migration: the flow of people
 - Three important limitations to the global culture thesis: 1. flow of goods, info, and people is uneven. 2. assumes that people everywhere are able to afford the new goods and services. 3. although many cultural elements spread throughout the world, people everywhere do not attach meanings to them
- Theoretical Analysis of Culture
 - macro-level approach: understand culture from a broad perspective
 - micro-level approach: personal experience of culture
- The Functions of Culture: Structural-Functional Analysis
 - explains culture as a complex strategy for meeting human needs
 - *Idealism*: considers values to be the core of a culture
 - helps us understand unfamiliar ways of life
 - cultural universals: traits that are part of every known culture: caring for children, funeral rites, jokes
 - strength: lies in showing how culture operates to meet human needs
 - weaknesses: ignores cultural diversity, emphasizes cultural stability, downplays the importance of change
- Inequality and Culture: Social-Conflict Analysis
 - any cultural trait benefits some members of society at the expense of others
 - culture is shaped by a society's system of economic production: materialism
 - views capitalism as "natural"
 - strains of inequality erupt into movements for social change
 - critical review: stressing the divisiveness of culture understates ways in which cultural patterns integrate members of a society
- Evolution and Culture: Sociobiology
 - Sociobiology: a theoretical approach that explores ways in which human biology affects how we create culture
 - rests on the theory of evolution proposed by Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*
 - 1. All living things live to reproduce themselves
 - 2. gene variation allows each species to "try out" new life patterns in a particular environment
 - 3. over thousands of generations, the genes that promote reproduction survive and become dominant
 - 4. large number of cultural universals = humans are members of a single biological species
 - Critical review: may promote racism and sexism, research suggests that biological forces do not *determine* human behavior. Human learn behavior within a culture