

RELI2732 Summary Notes

William Findlay

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Contents

1	Introduction	1
1.1	The Buddhist Parable of the Mustard Seed	1
1.2	Characteristics of Religious Ritual	1
1.3	Van Gennep’s Rite of Passage	1
1.4	Different Definitions of Death	1
1.5	Issues With Comparative Study of Religion	1
1.6	Reading	1
2	Indigenous Religions	1
2.1	The Role of Affect in Religion	1
2.2	Basilov’s Characteristics of Indigenous Religions	1
2.3	Souls and Spirits in Indigenous Religions	1
2.4	Wari’ Funeral Practice	1
2.5	The Melpa Understanding of Souls	1
2.6	Reading	1
3	Death in the Ancient World	1
3.1	The Egyptian View of the Soul	1
3.2	Three Textual Primary Sources of Understanding the Egyptian Views on Death	1
3.3	Death in “The Epic of Gilgamesh”	1
3.4	Babylonian Funeral Practice	1
3.5	Zoroastrian Funerals	1
3.6	The Divisions of the Underworld in Greek Thought	1
3.7	Early Human Perspectives on Death	1
3.8	What Constitutes a Burial	1
3.9	Reading	1
A	Definitions	1

List of Figures

List of Tables

A.1 A glossary of important definitions.	1
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List of Listings

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Buddhist Parable of the Mustard Seed
- 1.2 Characteristics of Religious Ritual
- 1.3 Van Gennep's Rite of Passage
- 1.4 Different Definitions of Death
- 1.5 Issues With Comparative Study of Religion
- 1.6 Reading

2 Indigenous Religions

- 2.1 The Role of Affect in Religion
- 2.2 Basilov's Characteristics of Indigenous Religions
- 2.3 Souls and Spirits in Indigenous Religions
- 2.4 Wari' Funeral Practice
- 2.5 The Melpa Understanding of Souls
- 2.6 Reading

3 Death in the Ancient World

- 3.1 The Egyptian View of the Soul
- 3.2 Three Textual Primary Sources of Understanding the Egyptian Views on Death
- 3.3 Death in "The Epic of Gilgamesh"
- 3.4 Babylonian Funeral Practice
- 3.5 Zoroastrian Funerals
- 3.6 The Divisions of the Underworld in Greek Thought
- 3.7 Early Human Perspectives on Death
- 3.8 What Constitutes a Burial
- 3.9 Reading

A Definitions

Table A.1: A glossary of important definitions.

Term	Definition
Week 1: Introduction	
Memento Mori	The idea of reflection on mortality. Literally: remembrance of death.
Thanatology	The study of death.

Iron Crutch Li	One of the Eight Immortals in the Taoist (Ancient Chinese) pantheon. He left his body for up to a week at a time in order to talk to the gods.
Taphophobia	The fear of being buried alive.
Brain Death	The complete loss of all brain function, both voluntary and involuntary. Used as a legal indicator of death in many jurisdictions.
Phenomenology	A focus on consciousness and objects of direct experience. We want to look at the lived experience of religious people, rather than approaching from a faith-based perspective.
Epoche	The suspension of judgement. We don't worry about the truth of a story; instead we look at what it means to the discourse community that tells/told it.
Cosmology	A religious culture's view of the universe.
Soteriology	The study of religious doctrines of salvation.
Discourse Community	A group of people who share a common discourse. They share a set of basic values and assumptions which facilitates communication. In the past, discourse communities were a lot harder to form.

Week 2: Indigenous Religions

The Psychic Unity Of Humanity	The idea that all humans across all cultures and all time periods have essentially the same cognitive ability; any differences can be attributed to culture.
Numinous	The feeling of a spiritual presence. Defined by Rudolph Otto in The Idea of the Holy.
Tupilak	A totem thrown into the sea by the Inuit; it sends a vengeful spirit to kill the enemies of the shaman.
Shaman	A religious professional who interacts directly with the spirits.
Near-Death Experience	A personal experience associated with death or impending death. Often cited as evidence of cosmological claims. A famous example is Even Alexander and his book, Proof of Heaven.
Commensal Community	A community that shares food together.

Week 3: Death in the Ancient World

Osiris	
Isis	
Horus	
Anubis	
Ma'at	
Mummification	
Zoroaster	
Ahura Mazda	
Dakhma	
Fravshi	