

RELI2732 Summary Notes

William Findlay

January 22, 2019

Contents

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

List of Figures

List of Tables

A.1 A glossary of important definitions.	3
--	---

List of Listings

1 Introduction

1.1 The Buddhist Parable of the Mustard Seed

- cosmological claim
 - souls “flow” for a hundred thousand ages
- Skinny Gotami
 - has a son so people respect her
 - son dies
 - sorrow to the point of madness
- desperately carries the body around begging for medicine
 - finally sent to the Buddha
- the Buddha tells her
 - find a family unaffected by death and get a mustard seed from them
 - Gotami eventually realizes everyone is affected by death
 - she finds enlightenment

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 1

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 2

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 3

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 Eben 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	