

# ANT10 0 Notes Cult.

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## 1 Lecture 1 Jan.11 2018

### 1.1 Culture: universal ability and particular culture

being able to *have culture* is *programmed* by our genes the *program* enables culture=specific ways of acting, living and thinking:

- Forming precreative relationships.
- Recognizing hierarchy.
- Dealing with violence.
- Sharing and giving.
- Education.
- Speaking: language, how you see it.

## 1.2 Cultural universals and particulars

Cultures are significantly different, but not infinitely different.  
Human cultures have more in common than not.

## 1.3 Language

**Language** is a distinctively human resource and central element of culture, used for:

- Communication and cooperation.
- Adapting to the natural and social environment.
- Signification. *Making meanings.*
- Structuring our imagination.
- How we see the world.
- Each other.
- Ourselves.

**Language and languages** Like cultures, languages have more in common than not.

**Word universals:**

- Nouns and verbs.
- Importance of word order.

## 1.4 Recap: Universals and Divisions

Language and Culture are human universals, but specific language and specific cultures are human particulars.

Universals(language, culture) are innate. *Transmitted via gene (through sex)*

...

## 1.5 Adaptive Value of Social Transmission

Social transmission is much more flexible than genetic transmission:

- Major changes can occur within a generation or two.
- Major changes can occur without a change of species.

Language and culture allow us to adapt to new situations.

## 1.6 Why the differences?

Specific languages and cultures develop to cope with specific environment and social contexts. **niches**.

**Cultures:** potlatch, brides-wealth / dowry.

Culture can change the niche itself.

Result: Adaptation without becoming a new species.

## 1.7 Difference. Conflict. Prejudice

Within all species, groups can come into conflict, often over *resources*.

The resources may be *natural* or *socials*.

In *homo-sapiens* these groups may have different cultures and languages.

and this may be accompanied by prejudices about the other.

Prejudice does **not** come from difference but from its **context**

## 1.8 Physical Type and Prejudice

**Race** a *folk* notion, not a scientific notion. Human **race** are not scientifically but *popularly* defined.

Does races exist?

Yes! But not as a scientific category. And race is not really based (only) on physical appearance.

**Different humans do look different.** and human looks can correlate with some other genetic traits. But this is **not** consistently enough to justify *scientifically* the notion of human races.

There is more variation (other than skin color, and some other exceptions) across than within races.

The popular definition of race are *imprecise*.

## 1.9 The One-Drop Rule

If you have any *black blood*, then you're black.

Also word for other non-white groups: if you have any non-white blood, then you're not white.

**Brown** a new racial category. Cover people who are neither black nor white.

**Lesson from the One-Drop Rule** Humans do differ by appearance, but their *classification* by difference is not given nature,

It is given by **language**.

If there were no words for the different races, then there would not be races.

Possible test question: How does the one-drop rule prove that race is not a classification given by nature.

## 1.10 Social Construction and Nature

**Social construction** is the source of ideas and arrangements that are not given by nature.

Social construction is not part of nature, but does works with natural materials.

Race works with real, natural evidence, yet is determined by society, not nature.

**Invented** Ideas that are the result of social construction.

## 1.11 Naturalization

**Naturalization** The process that people come to think of what was socially constructed as if it were given by nature.

**Conclusion** Race is real: invented but naturalized.

Other examples: national identities, gender roles.

## 1.12 Talking About Race

Silence and color-blindness is **not** the solution.

Social science *describe* before it can (if it ever can) prescribe.

**Political correctness** aims to protect others.

but it can be a hindrance to understanding.

if it prevents us from *talking* about what we see as happening,

or ...

## 1.13 The Role of Anthropology

Unravel the social constructedness of invented (but real) categories like race, national identity, or gender.

Discover their **genealogy**.

This work must precede any advice anthropologists can give on what is right or *correct*.

**Genealogy** What history makes them possible.

### Race and Power Relations: The Genealogy of Black and White

Racial classification are made in the context of relations of power within society.

People have always perceived differences of skin color ...

but did not classify people into distinct categories of *race* ...

Race meant imagined common descent, and include English or Irish ...

The *black race* and *white race* were *invented* along with slavery in the Americas.

*Whiteness* means freedom and need to be protected.