## How do I learn about culture?

1. Self and “other”
   1. “othering” is the act of assigning difference to an individual or a group based upon one’s own perspective
      1. Can produce:
         1. Misunderstanding
         2. Fear
         3. Judgment
         4. Hostility
         5. Genocide
         6. Rejection
   2. “Othering” is characterized by ethnocentrism, binary, thought, and the fear of difference
      1. Self/other
      2. Human/sub-human(“monstrous races” Eller p. 54)
      3. Us/Them
      4. Good/evil
      5. Civilized/savage
      6. Advanced/backwards
      7. Normal/Deviant
   3. Cultural anthropology grew out of cross-cultural concerns regarding issues and ideas of “self” and “other”
      1. Completion of European global imperialism
      2. Scientific revolution: the theory of evolution
         1. Development of scientific method based on Darwin’s theory of evolution
            1. He was a very devout Christian and was morally opposed to slavery
         2. Imperative to be skeptical and “cross-examine” authoritative claims
         3. Imperative to “base conclusions on careful and sustained observations in external reality” (Eller p. 58)
   4. Cultural evolutionism (1877)
      1. Cultures evolve in linear fashion from savage to civilized
      2. Three main phases of society – savagery, barbarism, and civilization
      3. Societies arranged in order of technology
   5. American Historicism (Early 20th century)
      1. Franz Boas’ approach which induces(moving “up” from data) rather than deduces(moving “down” on grand theory) was an approach which introduced greater methodological rigor to the field
   6. British Functionalism (Early 20th century, after WWI – 20s & 30s)
      1. Each culture practice and institution fulfills a particular function for human survival.
      2. Focused on the individual
   7. French Structuralism (Mid 20th century)
      1. Claude Levi-Strauss
      2. Seeks to understand the deep ,subconscious, unobservable, structure of human realities that is believed to determine observable behavior.
      3. Binary oppositions or pairs: The fundamental characteristic of human thought. Contrasting pairs of items or concepts..
   8. Feminist Anthropology
      1. Response to male/paternalistic biases in the field, initially focused on women, gender construction, and gender inequality, increasingly concerned now with power and inequality in general.
   9. Interpretive Anthropology (60s and 70s)
      1. Clifford Geertz
      2. Culture as text and ethnographer as “interculture translator”
      3. Meaning-center approach
      4. “Human beings are caught in webs of meaning they themselves have created”
   10. Post-Modern Anthropology
       1. No grand theory of human behavior possible
       2. Emphasizes collaborations and reflexivity
       3. All knowledge is contextual
       4. All knowledge is relative
       5. An elaboration of Boas’ Cultural Relativism
   11. Marxist / Critical Anthropology and Political Economy
       1. The political and economic environment influences individuals, societies, and cultures
       2. “Marxism” is a way of viewing and studying society
       3. Focuses on “power differentials” and power inequalities between individuals, groups, and societies