Deep Structure of Culture Worldview









Worldview





Deep Structure Review

- The key to why a culture views the world as it does.
- The earliest markers in the evolution of culture were: Family, History (Community) and Worldview (Religion, Secularism/Scientific, and Spirituality/Metaphysical).



"Worldview" definitions

- Worldview is a culture's orientation toward God, humanity, nature questions of existence, the universe and cosmos, life, moral and ethical reasoning, suffering, death, and other philosophical issues that influence how its members perceive their world.
- Worldview is a way we interpret reality.



Worldview and Culture

- Often, worldviews operate at an unconscious level so we are not even aware that other ways of seeing the world are possible. (Hall)
- Worldview provides some of the unexamined underpinnings for perception and the nature of reality. (Dana)



Expressions of Worldview – The Big Questions.

What is the purpose of life?
 Is the world ruled by law, chance, or "God?"
 What is the right way to live?
 How did the world begin?
 What happens when we die?



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Forms of Worldview – Religion

- There is no known group of people anywhere on earth who, at any time over the past 10,000 years, have been w/o some manifestation of spirituality or religion.
- A belief in the existence of a reality greater than the human has served as a definer and creator of cultures. (more upcoming)

Forms of Worldview – Secularism

- As early as 400 BC, Plato spoke of the portion of humankind that did not believe in the existence of any of the gods.
- At the heart of secularism is the view that human beings can get along fine w/o God.



Secularism, cont.

- Not only do secularists deny the existence of God, they hold a belief in the centrality of science and the scientific method.
- Maintain that because death is final and there is not heaven, hell, or reincarnation, a person should engage in acts that contribute to the good of humanity in this world.

Spirituality

- At the core is the belief that each person use his or her individual resources to discover inner peace.
- Is more of a personal search rather than a way of having answers to life's big questions imposed by something outside the person.



Spirituality, cont.

Followers of this approach say:

- •Knowing yourself will give you a sense of purpose, allowing you to connect to others and a "higher source."
- •Spirituality can be expressed in a host of ways: contemplation and art, meditation, prayer, and even traditional religious worship.

Religion and Intercultural Comm.

- Globalism, peoples of religion are no longer long distances from each other. Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims, Christians are highly mobile.
- Study of religion prepares us to appreciate different modes of behaviour.
- It is also urgent to be able to assess real and potential dangers posed by extremists.

Religious Similarities

- Speculation. Religions help us understand where people came from, why they are here, what happens when they die, why there is suffering.
- <u>Sacred Scriptures</u>. Each religion believes its sacred writings have divine or spirit-induced origin. Written/spoken by God or teachers with deep spiritual insight.

Similarities, cont.

Rituals

- •Ritual recalls past events, preserving and transmitting foundations of society.
- •Participants in ritual become identified with sacred past, perpetuating traditions as they re-establish the principles by which the group lives.
- Serves to relieve social tensions and reinforce bonds.

Religious Similarities

- <u>Ethics</u>. Religions discriminate what is acceptable and unacceptable ie. Right and wrong.
- <u>Safe Haven</u>. Religious beliefs offer the comforting sense that the vulnerable human condition serves a great purpose. People are therefore less likely to collapse in despair when confronted by life's calamities.

World Religions

- Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism.
- Looked at in terms of:
- Origins | Core Assumptions
 Cultural Manifestations | Notions about Death





- Largest of traditions: over 1/3 of the world's population.
- World Christian Encyclopedia lists 33,800 different Christian denominations.
 - Three main branches: Roman Catholic, Greek Orthodox, and Protestantism.



- A monotheistic tradition with a belief in the trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God (Father) is the eternal creator, Jesus (Son) is the savior of humankind who then died and was resurrected, physically rising from the dead (Holy Spirit).
- Christianity is a set of principles that offers followers beliefs, a way of life, and a community.





Cultural Manifestations

- Organized Worship. Christianity emphasizes and encourages a gathered community, the church.
- <u>Individual.</u> Appealing in a culture that values individualism – One-on-one bond with God.
- <u>Doing.</u> "Living in the world" rather than withdrawing is emphasized.



Cultural Manifestations, cont.

- <u>The Future.</u> Built into Christian ideology is a positive and optimistic outlook toward the future.
- Gender. Jesus readily accepted women into his circle of friends and disciples.
- <u>Courage.</u> One of the most enduring tendencies of the Jesus story is the message of courage in the face of adversity.

Notions about Death

- Christian doctrine maintains there is an "afterlife"

 an eternal life and that salvation is possible
 through the caring and loving creator.
- The human soul is immortal and is destined to spend eternity in the presence of God in heaven.
- Hell is sheer torture and is reserved for the damned who will be cast into the furnace of fire.

Islam



- Islam is a vital force in the contemporary world but is much misunderstood.
- Fastest-growing religion with 1.5 billion followers 20 percent of the world's population.



Origins

- The beginning of Islam was expedited by Muhammed (AD 570-632) – a person of insight.
- The angel Gabriel appeared to and told him God had chosen him to be His messenger.
- Religious particularism encouraged missionary zeal – Islam established a presence in Europe, North Africa, Persia, Central Asia, Egypt, Turkey.

- One God. Allah is one, there is no God but Allah.
- Submission to the Five Pillars of Islam. Islam itself means 'submission' to God and His will.
- Fatalism. Destiny unfolds according to Allah's will.
- Judgment. All Muslims (ie people of the Islamic faith) will stand before God and will be judged and a person's deeds will be evaluated

Sunni and Shiite

- After Muhammed's death, Sunni Muslims wanted his successor to be elected. Shiites thought the heir should come from the family line.
- Shiites, representing 10 15% of population, regard themselves as the most pious and holy.
- Shiites see the role of imam as spiritual. Sunnis are more pragmatic.

Islam

Five Pillars of Islam

- Statement of Belief. "La Ellah Ela Allah."
- Prayer Five times a day.
- Almsgiving. From the mercy of God.
- Fasting. During holy month of Ramadan.
- Pilgimage to Mecca.



Cultural Manifestations

- A Complete Way of Life. Religion and social membership are inseparable.
- Gender. Women are to be modest in public and conceal their charms.
- Art and Architecture. Emphasize shapes, forms design, style, mosaics and calligraphy rather than human forms.



Notions about Death

- Notion of a moral code and its tie to an afterlife is one of the most fundamental elements of Islam.
- Heaven abounds in deep rivers of cool, crystal water, lush fruit and vegetation, boundless fertility and beautiful mansions.
- Hell includes molten metal, boiling liquids, and fire that splits everything to pieces.

Hinduism



- Almost a billion followers, is the world's oldest known religion.
- No single founder, creed, teacher or prophet and no single holy.
- "How could any one deity account for so varied a creation."

Hinduism

- In some Hindu philosophies there is one ultimate Deity. Also known as Atman (one's true self), all others are considered his avatars.
- There are some sects that consider the various deities not as forms of the one Ishvara, but as independently existing entities, therefore are polytheists.



Origins

- Difficult as Hinduism had its beginnings before people employed written records.
- Sacred texts include the four books of Vedas (beginning 1400 BC), Upanishads (800 – 400 BC), and Bhagavad-Gita (500 BC) a lengthy poem that teaches how to achieve union with the supreme Reality through the paths of knowledge, devotion, selfless work and meditation.

- <u>Divine in Everything.</u> Magic, nature worship, animal veneration and <u>unlimited</u> deities.
- <u>Ultimate Reality.</u> Hold that there are other realities that lead to spiritual advancement. T experience true happiness (nirvana) one must discover the spiritual existence found outside traditional concepts of reality.

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- Brahman. The ultimate level of reality, a philosophical absolute, serenely blissful, beyond all ethical and metaphysical limitations.
- <u>Discovery of Self.</u> Intellect is subordinate to intuition. Truth resides within us. The world is an illusion because nothing is permanent. It is possible to break the cycle of birth, death reincarnation through bliss and joy of *nivana*.

Hindu

Cultural Manifestations

- Complete Way of Life. As with other religions, Hinduism is more a culture than creed.
- <u>Dharma.</u> Provides guidance on how to behave, perform vocational obligations, act during various life cycles. If go against dharma, will produce bad karma.



Hindu

Cultural Manifestations

Four Stages of Life:

- Student (studies the Vedas),
- Householder (marriage and ethical life),
- Forest dweller (intensive studies and meditation,
- Ascetic (independent from material world and unites with Brahman)

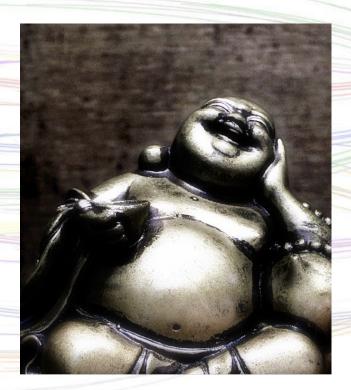
Hindu

Notions about Death

- Hindus believe in the immortality of the soul and in reincarnation.
- Even though the physical body dies, a person's soul does not have a beginning or an end but simply passes into another reincarnation at the end of life.



Buddhism



 Small in number compared to others (about 400 million) but influence on civilization is profound.



Buddism

Origins

- Founded in about 563 BC by an Indian prince named Siddhartha Gautama who was disillusioned with his opulence.
- He became a Buddha (Enlightened One) in a flash one day while meditating.
- About 230 BC Buddhists were sent to Sri Lanka and spread across SE Asia and into Japan by about the 6th Century AD.

Buddism

Origins

- Buddha made it clear he was not a god but simply a man who had become enlightened.
- Buddha taught that all individuals have the potential to seek the truth on their own.
- In Buddhism we see a worldview more concerned with humanism and the art of daily living than with supernatural authority.

Four Noble Truths

- 1. Dukkha. Life is suffering; not attaining what one desires is suffering.
- 2. Tanha. Suffering is caused by craving, envy, greed and ignorance.
- 3. End of Suffering comes by removing the unhappiness caused by cravings.
- 4. The "remedy" the Noble Eightfold Path.



The Noble Eightfold Path

- 1. Right view. Accepting the reality and origins of suffering and ways leading its cessation.
- 2. Right purpose. Being free from ill will.
- 3. Right speech. Speak the truth.
- Right action. Moral, honourable, peaceful conduct. Self control and mindful of others rights. Buddhism's "10 commandments."

The Noble Eightfold Path

- 1. <u>Right livelihood.</u> Refrain from occupations that harm living beings.
- 2. Right efforts. Develop wholesome states of mind.
- 3. Right mindfulness. Moment-to-moment attention to what is "Critical thinking."
- 4. Right concentration. Meditation when the mind is still, true nature is reflected.

Buddhism

Cultural Manifestations

- Improbability of Language. Language is considered deceptive and misleading with regard to understanding the truth.
- Impermanency. Appreciate the moment, appreciate the tentative nature of life.
- <u>Karma.</u> We are born and evolve according to the quality of our karma (good deeds).

Buddhism

Notions about Death

- Death is only an end to a temporary phenomenon and a person can be born over and over in different times and forms.
- Once there is enough good karma, a person will experience nirvana.
- Nirvana is happiness and a way of seeing the world in its true nature. John Cage