

SOCI 101
INTRODUCTION TO
SOCIOLOGY

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Connectedness (Who Am I? A Part of the Main)
Theme: Connecting Self ↔ Society

No man, no man is an island
Way out on the water / all alone to stand

But I am / Tired of the dry land
Ready for a new shore / Ready to expand

You seem / Happy with your daydreams
Happy to just stand there / Rooted to the sand

But all along I know I had selfish motives
Everybody knows
That you can live

And give your life for love
Your life for love



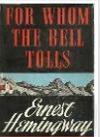
Artist: Enter the Haggis
Song: life for love
Album: Casualties of Retail

Sociology in Poetry

No Man is an Island

...No man is an island, entire of itself.
Every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main.
If a **clod** be washed away by the sea,
Europe is the less, as well as if a **promontory** were,
as well as if a **manor** of thy friends or of thine own were.
Any man's death diminishes me, because **I am involved in mankind**
and therefore never send to know **for whom the bell tolls** it tolls for thee.

-- John Donne
Meditation XVII
"Devotions upon Emergent Occasions"
1624



C. What is Culture?

Culture refers to **the symbols, values, behavior and material objects (artifacts) that together form a people's way of life.**

1. Sociologists like to point out that
"Culture is to people like water is to fish."

In other words, we take our cultural knowledge and behavior for granted; it remains hidden in plain sight, not a part of our conscious experience. It seems **natural** to us – but it is not. **Culture ≠ Nature**

Ethnocentrism: centered on one's own ethnicity (or culture), to the point where you cannot judge another culture on their own terms.

Culture Shock: the disorientation experienced when confronted with a new set of norms and values

C. What is Culture?

2. How can we better understand the idea of culture? **Culture is BOTH:**

a. **Material culture** – tangible, physical cultural artifacts.

Example: *paper* money

b. **Non-material culture** – intangible, mental cultural meanings.

Example: *value* of a "dollar"

ACTION



THOUGHT

It is through **CULTURE** that thought and action come together.

C. What is Culture?

3. Elements of Culture

There are four main elements to culture:

- a. Symbols
- b. Language
- c. Values, Beliefs and Norms
- d. Artifacts

C. What is Culture?

a. Symbols

A symbol is **anything that carries a particular meaning recognized by people who share a culture.**

Each of our social institutions is populated with a vast number of symbols which hold specific meaning to us.

Examples: economic institutions = \$ € £ ¥

religious institutions = ☩ ☆ ☪ ☪

political institutions =    

language = W Ω ٢

people = 

C. Components of Culture

b. Language and Communication

A system of symbols that allows people to communicate with one another.

i. Origins: 3500 BC, Mesopotamia

Written language developed with civilization.

ii. Purpose: **cultural transmission** (through "memes")

Language passes on cultural ideas. *How?*

SELF ← culture /language/memes → SOCIETY

iii. **Evolutionary linguistics** is the scientific study of the psychosocial development and cultural evolution of languages

C. Components of Culture

c. Values, Norms and Beliefs

i. **Values** are culturally defined standards of desirability, goodness, and beauty, which serve as guidelines for social living. In an open society, **values are always being debated.** Variation exists in the meaning of values; these differences can lead to "**Culture Wars**," such as our current *situation of having to choose between*

Freedom vs. Security –

How is our culture of fear threatening our American value on freedom?

ii. **Norms** = ideals for social behavior

"**Folkways**": informal everyday conventions (saying "good afternoon")

"**Mores**": deeper ideals (virtue, justice – more strictly enforced)

iii. **Beliefs** are statements that people hold to be true.

Does Belief = Truth?

*How do we KNOW what to BELIEVE?
See the "ways of knowing" from section B.*

C. Components of Culture

d. Artifacts are:

the wide range of material human creations that **reflect underlying cultural values.**

We place **MEANING** into artifacts (all **material** artifacts are also symbolic and hold **immaterial** value).



Culture transmits meaning between selves through more or less successful memes.



Non-material cultural values are reflected in the material culture we value and possess.



4. Globalization of Culture

Is there a developing "global culture?"

A global culture may be developing in *three ways*:

a. The flow of goods

- Material product trading has never been as important



b. The flow of information

- There are few, if any, places left on earth where **worldwide** communication is not possible



c. The flow of people

- Flow of information means people learn about places on earth where they feel life may be better



