

Chapter 3. Our Collective Story: Human Commonalities

Chapter 3. A. Study Questions

Chapter 3. Section 1. Human Commonalities: An Introduction

Section 1. Terms to Consider:

evolutionary psychology

Carl Jung

Archetypes

collective unconscious

culture

need

belonging

consciousness

self-actualization

materialists

dualistic thinking

Section 1. Questions to Consider

1. Individual Commonalities

- a. What do you think is the meaning of the statement “there is a psychological unity of all humankind”? Do you agree with this statement?
- b. What does Carl Jung say about the psychological unity of all humankind? With what evidence does he support his reasoning?
- c. What is your reaction to Albert Einstein’s quote at the beginning of this chapter?
- d. What is dualistic thinking?
- e. Research ways in which dualistic thinking has been expressed through our human history.
- f. What is your reaction to the Human Commonalities Model? Do you think it adequately explains human behaviors? Explain.

2. Group Commonalities

- a. What is the connection between individual commonalities and the currents?
- b. Can you think of other commonalities that are expressed by human groups?

Chapter 3. Section 2. Relationship with Nature: Ecosystem Currents

Section 1. Terms to Consider:

ecosystem

environment

natural populations

carrying capacity

Section 2. Questions to Consider:

1. Geography

a. What is your reaction to the Hot/Cold regions, Wet/Dry regions and High/Low regions model? Is there something you would add to make the model more complete?

2. Human Population

a. Why are human populations clustered into dense zones?

3. Human and Nature Interaction

a. Think of examples of how humans either demonize or glorify natural occurrences. Why do we do this?

b. What does it mean to live within nature's limits? What are nature's limits? Are we living within nature's limits now?

c. What does the following quote mean to you: "destructive and creative energies are neutral to nature, with no troublesome duality; humans may prescribe a moral judgment, such as good or evil, to these natural actions and events."

Chapter 3. Section 3. Ways of Living: Techno-Economic Patterns

Section 3. Terms to Consider:

economic system

technology

labor

exchange

distribution

trade

Section 3. Questions to Consider:

1. Daily Life

a. How does geography and environment influence the construction of people's daily life?

b. How is your daily life impacted by these influences?

2. Economic Systems

a. What are the three types of economic systems?

b. According to Leslie White, the character of a particular society will be most directly influenced by its subsistence technology. Do you agree with this statement? If not what do you think most directly influences the character of a particular society?

3. Labor

a. Why has labor been divided according to gender through much of our world history?

b. Why has it changed in our present, modern society?

4. Exchange and Trade

a. What is the difference between trade and exchange?

b. Why is distribution an important component of trade?

Chapter 3. Section 4. Human Networks: Social Currents

Section 4. Terms to Consider:

kinship

kinship groups
in-group
out-group
institution
family
nuclear family
extended family
household
marriage
monogamy
serial monogamy
polygamy
polygyny
polyandry
 fatherhood
 population control
infanticide
 gender
 biology and culture
prestige
status
rank
egalitarian
leveling mechanisms
stratified societies
ascribed status
achieved status
socialization
educational institutions

Section 4. Questions to Consider:

1. Human Networks

- a. Humans prefer to quell change and promote continuity whenever possible. Do you agree or disagree with this statement. Why?
- b. Do you think this statement is true of our society today? Explain.
- c. Do you belong to a network of kinship relations? Describe it.
- d. What institutions are represented in our modern society? Why did they form? What function do they provide?

2. Family

- a. Why do you think families have been such a long-lasting institution in our human history?
- b. Do you belong to a family? If so describe it. If not describe the closest thing to a family relationship that you are in.
- in. How does it feel to be part of a family? How does it feel if you are not part of a family?

3. Marriage

- a. What are the mating preferences of males and females? Why?
- b. What are the different marriage parameters in our human history?
- c. What are the marriage parameters in your particular nation?
- d. Are there any challenges to these parameters? (i.e. gay marriage, more than one spouse, etc.)

- e. Why do human societies historically need to control sexual activity?
 - f. Historically, who has been responsible for child care? Has this changed in modern society?
 - g. What has historically been the role of fathers in families?
4. Population Control
- a. What forms of population control have been used in our human history?
 - b. What forms do we use today?
5. Gender
- a. What is the difference between the terms sex and gender?
 - b. Why has there been such widespread devaluation of females and their role in our history?
 - c. What do you think is more important in shaping gender roles: biology or culture? Why?
6. Prestige and Status
- a. What forms of prestige do you have in your society today? Why do you have these particular forms?
 - b. What forms of rank do you have in your society today? Why do you have these particular forms?
 - c. What leveling mechanisms are employed to balance an egalitarian society?
 - d. Is your society an egalitarian or stratified one? Why?
 - e. What are examples of ascribed status? Of achieved status?
7. Socialization and Education
- a. Are you socialized into your society? How? Give examples.
 - b. Do you think educational institutions socialize young people? Give examples.

Chapter 3. Section 5. Establishing Order: Political Patterns

Section 5. Terms to Consider:

decentralized

band

tribe

chiefdom

state

empire

nation

oligarchy

customs

laws

murder

negotiation

property ownership

culture

boundary

interaction

altruism

sanctions

wergild

war

male bonding

Section 5. Questions to Consider:

1. Order

- a. Describe the political form where you live.
- b. Why do humans have an aversion to disorder? Give examples of how they try to prevent disorder.
- c. How does your nation avoid disorder? Does it work?
- d. How does property ownership avoid disorder? How can it also cause disorder?

2. Culture

- a. What does culture mean?
- b. What are the different ways that the term culture is used?
- c. What do you think it means when stated that cultures are imagined constructs and do not have rigid boundaries? Do you think this is a true statement?
- d. Give several examples of the similarities between biological and cultural interaction.

3. Conflict, War, and Peace

- a. What is your reaction to the statement that both selfish/aggressive and cooperative behaviors, paradoxically, exist within our human species?
- b. What forms of social control are "built into" individuals? Give examples.
- c. What forms of social control are externalized? Give examples.
- d. In your opinion do you think a wergild is an effective form of social control?
- e. What are some of the causes of war?
- f. In what ways does your society promote peaceful behavior?
- g. In what ways does your society promote warlike behavior?
- h. What behaviors are most promoted? Why?
- i. What is your opinion about Robert Russell's theory of warfare?

Chapter 3. Section 6. Human Expression: Cultural Currents

Section 6. Terms to Consider:

attitudes

ethnocentrism

values

customs

traditions

spirituality

invisible world

psyche

religion

ritual

moral code

ecstasy

religious ceremonies

rites of passage

shamans

priest/priestess

supernatural beings

animism

ancestral spirits

body language

language

gossip

identity

aesthetic expression

art

savanna hypothesis

myths

legends

Section 6. Questions to Consider:

1. Ethnocentrism

- a. Give examples of ethnocentric behaviors in your society.
- b. Why are there ethnocentric behaviors?
- c. Do you or your friends hold ethnocentric attitudes? What are they? Why are they held?

2. Spirituality and Religion

- a. What paths do people follow in order to connect to a spiritual dimension?
- b. Do you connect with any of these particular paths? Explain.
- c. Do you see a difference between religion and spirituality?
- d. What are the different ways that humans express their spiritual or religious dimension?
- e. Which dimension (if any) do you connect with?
- f. What are the various functions or reasons for religion?
- g. In what ways do humans express their spiritual or religious connection?
- h. In what ways do you express (or not express) your spiritual or religious connection?
- i. What is the difference between folk and universal religions?

3. Communication

- a. Explore different ways that humans communicate with body language. Practice in a group.
- b. What is the primary purpose of language?
- c. How would you describe your identity?

4. Aesthetic Expression

- a. What are the different forms of human expression?
- b. What is your favorite form of aesthetic expression? Why?
- c. How do you convey your favorite form of aesthetic expression?
- d. One historian proclaims that we have "myth history" not history. What do you think that means?