

Introduction to Sociology

- I. Chapter 3's Focus on North & South Korea (Ferrante video introduction)
- II. The Challenge of Defining Culture: Core Concepts 1-3
- III. Horace Miner: The Nacirema Project
- IV. Ethnocentrism and Cultural Relativism (Core Concept 8)



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Culture and the two Koreas

- Are North and South Korea two different cultures?
- Something to ponder: Were West and East Germany two different cultures when they were reunified in 1989?
- What other cultures have profoundly influenced one or both of the two Koreas?
- Why is South Korean identity “intricately linked with the idea of being ‘not Japanese’”?



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What does Ferrante mean by saying that defining culture is a “challenge”?

- Why is describing a culture a difficult task?
- Why is it difficult to determine who belongs to a given culture?
- Why is it difficult to identify the distinguishing characteristics of a culture—what sets it off from others?
- Also: the problem of perspective: etic vs. emic analyses



“Culture cannot exist without a *society*, a group of interacting people who share, perpetuate, and create culture.” (p. 60)

• In a global world, is culture defined by place?

• The *detrterritorialization* of culture

• Culture is increasingly like a toolbox



Core Concept 2: Basic Components of Culture

• *Material vs. nonmaterial culture*

• *Beliefs, Values and Norms*

• *Two types of norms: folkways and mores*



Beliefs, Values, Norms, Folkways, Mores

Discussion:

**Is there a culture of the classroom?
What would be examples of each of these terms?**





**Culture in Action:
Video Clip on
“Samurai Baseball”**





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Video Clip on
“Samurai Baseball”**

Discussion

- *What does the video teach us about culture?*
- *Is this an early example of “glocalization”?*

Horace Miner’s Study of “Body Ritual Among the Nacirema”

- *Who are the Nacirema?*
- *What are the ritual centers that are found in all their houses that are discussed in this article?*
- *What do you think Horace Miner was trying to say in this article?*
- *What can this article teach us about cultural analysis?*



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Might there be some truth about the claim that...

- the Nacirema believe that the human body is so ugly that enormous amounts of time and money must be spent trying to overcome that?
- that the Nacirema are masochistic?
- that the Nacirema are a magic-ridden people?
- that the Nacirema engage in practices that might seem revolting to others?
- that Nacirema houses all include a room that is a center of ritual activities?

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Short Two-Page Page Assignment

- See Assignment link on daily schedule for details.
- Do an analysis modeled on Miner's of some other aspect of Nacirema culture
- Mimic Miner's approach and style
- Try to combine humor and insight in your *etic* analysis
- Include both a description of the cultural practice and an interpretation of what light it sheds on the Nacirema



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Core Concept 8: The Home Culture as a Standard

- The experience of travel: culture shock and reentry shock (recommended: Rick Steve's "How Travel Changed my Perspective and Politics")
- The concepts of ethnocentrism and cultural relativism



Ethnocentrism
Its Popular Meaning



Ethnocentrism



**Its More Subtle
Manifestation**

**the interpretation of
the practices of
another culture in
terms of the meanings
of one's own culture**

Cultural Relativism
A Strategy of Understanding



***the effort to
understand a given
social practice on the
basis of the cultural
meanings of the
society in which it
takes place***

It is not the same thing as "moral relativism"

Summary: Analyzing Other Cultures

- *avoiding ethnocentrism*
- *recognizing the distinction between emic and etic analysis*
- *using “defamiliarization” as an observational strategy*
- *drawing from sociology’s “toolbox” of key concepts*
- *applying cultural relativism*

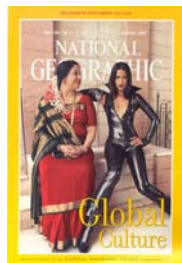
The Transmission and Use of Culture (Concepts 4-7)

- *Core Concept 4: Culture is learned.*
- *The importance of language: The Sapir-Whorf (linguistic relativity) hypothesis*



Core Concept 5: People are not cultural replicas of one another

- *toolkit vs. cultural dopes*
- *diversity is an inherent part of culture (as of nature)*
- *Some anthropologists: the concept of modal personality*



Core Concept 7: The Diffusion of Culture

- *both material and nonmaterial culture—can they be separated?*

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Orange-shaded countries air the Oprah Winfrey show
...but *glocalization* can be a complex process

**If time permits:
The Colonel Comes to Japan (video)**