



## 7. Cultural Geography

Geography 106 – California Geography | M. Pesses | Antelope Valley College



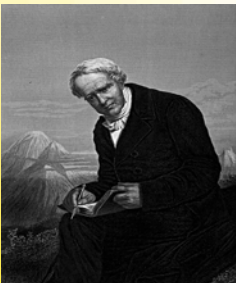

## Today

- Introduction to cultural geography
  - Themes
- Thinking like a cultural geographer





## Physical Geographers

- Interested in natural **places** & the **mobility** of matter & energy
- Synthesis of Earth's history & future





## Cultural Geographers

- Interested in human **places** & the **mobility** of people, thoughts, & money
- Synthesis of Earth's cultural history & future






## Overlap?



## Overlap with Other Studies

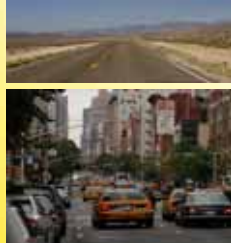
- Culture & tradition*
- Social interaction*
- Politics*

## Overlap with Other Studies

But...

- ♦ *Place & space*
- ♦ *Movement*
- ♦ *Spatial reasoning*
- ♦ *Context*



## Place is unique

- The world will never be “the same” everywhere
  - ♦ Physical differences
  - ♦ Regional differences
  - ♦ Cultural differences





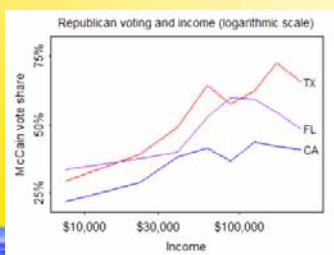
## Epistemology

How we know what we know

- Different geographers have different ideas about "truth"

## Epistemology

*Can a predictive model make generalizations about all of humanity?*



## Epistemology

*Is society about personal experience rather than numbers?*



## Epistemology

*Is culture & society all about who holds the power?*



## What is culture?



## What is culture?



## What is culture?

### Learned similarities

- *Traditions*
- *Language*
- *Beliefs*
- *Values*

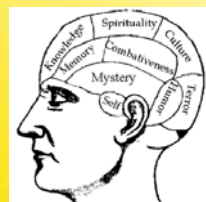


## Technology



## Culture

- Not a biological thing!
- Yes, the human form and our brains influence how our culture is formed, but **NO ONE IS BORN WITH CULTURE.**



## Parts of culture

**Material culture** – the side of culture concerned with “things”



## Parts of culture

**Non-material culture** – Beliefs, morals, myths, history

- The Bill of Rights
- Santa Claus





## Folk culture

- Rural people
- Cohesive
- Order maintained through religion or family
- Attached to place



## Popular culture

- More opportunity for **individualism**
- Family structure **weak**
- Examples of **outside** influences
- **Secular** institutions of authority
- Less attachment to **place**



## Indigenous culture

- People inhabiting the land before the moment of conquest/colonization



## Authenticity

Culture is a process

- ♦ *It changes!*



## Cultural Process

People can change culture

- ♦ Civil Rights Movement
- ♦ Prop 8 & Gay Marriage



## Power & Ideology

Who belongs in the landscape?

### **Marginalize**

- ♦ To keep a person or group outside of the "core" of society.

## Hegemony

- The reason why one group can rule and dominate another group without sheer force



Antonio Gramsci

## Power & Ideology

- Language
- Toponyms



## Language & Culture





## National Park System

Privileging the natural landscape...



## Nature & Culture

How people interact with, are affected by, use, & conserve the natural environment



## Environmental Determinism

- *Does the physical landscape affect humans to the point of controlling their progress and future?*
- *What role does technology play?*



## Environmental Possibilism

People, not the environment, control their culture and potential.

- ♦ Yes, a local environment will affect a culture, but it is up to human **choices** to truly define their society.
- ♦ *Can technology overcome nature?*



### How do we view nature?

- Organic view
  - ♦ We belong to nature
- Mechanistic view
  - ♦ Nature belongs to us



### Environmental Perception

#### Natural hazards

- ♦ God's will?
- ♦ Requires govt. protection?
- ♦ Overcome with technology?

Why live there?



### Humans as modifiers of the Earth

- Opposite of environmental determinism
- Erosion (over-grazing, farming)
- Climate change



### Landscape studies

#### To paraphrase Paul Groth

- ♦ Not being able to read the landscape is like a fish who can't see the water

### Reading the landscape

- What we build says a lot about who we are
  - ♦ Renaissance painters – *idealized* landscape
  - ♦ Geographers – *complete* landscape.







## Settlement Patterns

- Reading the urban and rural form
  - ♦ Urban centers = nucleated
  - ♦ Rural areas = dispersed
- How is a city, a town, or “the wilderness” divided?



## Landscape Links

- <http://www.walkinginla.com/>
- <http://www.greatmirror.com/>

## Next Time

- Early California

