



Technology, Culture, & Destiny

What Makes Humans Unique?

- ◆ Ability to laugh & smile
- ◆ Ability to lie effectively
- ◆ Cook food
- ◆ Use and manipulate symbols

Culture—A Definition

Acquired
knowledge
by a social group


Symbols
◆ Humans are dependent upon symbols
◆ Primates use symbols but do not depend upon them
◆ Humans use symbols to adapt to various environments
4

Evolution—Two Types
◆ Somatic—Physical Evolution – Physical changes in body structure
◆ Extrasomatic—Cultural Evolution – Methods and Techniques – i.e., “Technologies”
5

Through culture, we do not have to wait for somatic change

Australopithecine


- ◆ Family (7 types)
- ◆ 5 to 1.2 million years
 - Lower Paleolithic period
- ◆ “Ape-man” — Man Apes
 - 3-4 feet (1-1.3 meters) tall
- ◆ Tool Making capabilities:
 - chopping & pounding tools
 - Ostodontic-caradic (Bone/tooth/horn)



7

Homo Erectus


- ◆ 1.5 million years
 - Africa/Europe/S.E. Asia
- ◆ Sophisticated tool maker/user
 - Acheulean (identified by flaked tools)



8

Homo Erectus

- ◆ First conclusive evidence of:
 - Housing structures
 - Use of fire
 - Cooperative hunting



KNM-WT 15000, "Turkana Boy"

Homo Neanderthalensis

- ◆ Europe/Middle East regions
- ◆ Slightly more advanced tool making and usage
- ◆ Different tool types:
Bone, tooth, horned, wooden



10

Homo Neanderthalensis

Evidence of:

- ◆ Clothing
- ◆ Religion
Belief in an afterlife
Buried their dead



11

Homo Sapien

- ◆ Major advancements
- ◆ Great diversity of tools
- ◆ Agriculture and domestication of animals
- ◆ Neolithic (new stone age)

12

Homo Sapien

◆ High energy usage

- Heat (wood, coal, oil, nuclear)
- Power (animal, water, steam, electric)
- Transportation (ships, trains, autos, airplanes)

13

Law of Cultural Evolution

Culture at large evolves as the amount of energy harnessed per capita per year increases or as the methods of harnessing energy are made more efficient or as both factors work together.

Leslie White (Univ. of Michigan)

14

Cultural Materialism

◆ Leslie White

- “technological determinist”
i.e., technology-led theory of social change

◆ No one “great man” theory

- Individuals are insignificant to cultural change

15

Cultural Materialism

◆ Technologies

- help to shape and define culture
- fundamental condition underlying the pattern of social organization.
- technical developments, are the sole or prime antecedent causes of changes in society

from Chandler, D. "Technological or Media Determinism"

Cultural Evolution is:

◆ Logical

◆ Inextricable

- Complex or interwoven

◆ Stupid

17

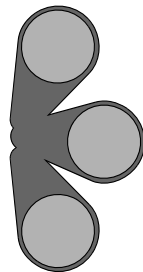
Culture: 3 Components

◆ Ideological

- Belief system

◆ Social

◆ Technological

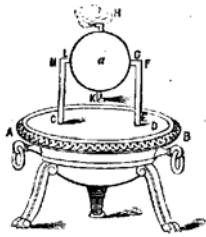


18

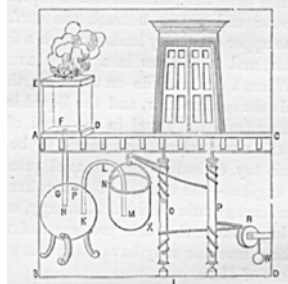
Role of Ideology

- ◆ Ideology *always* subordinates technology
- ◆ Example The Ancient Greeks
 - Hero of Alexandria (200 B.C.)
 - » or was it Cestesibus???
 - » Rotary Steam Engine & Temple Door Opening System 19

Hero's *Spiritaria seu Pneumatica*



Sketch of device No. 70 from Greenwood's translation.




Sketch of engine for opening temple doors by steam from Greenwood's translation. 20

Ideological systems prevent technological systems from fulfilling their true efficiencies

Evolution of Cultural Systems

- ◆ Bands
 - » 90% of all the people who ever lived were hunter/gatherers
- ◆ Tribes
- ◆ Chiefdoms
- ◆ States (up to nations)



22

Two Important Points...

- ◆ Culture is manifested symbolic knowledge
- ◆ Artifacts *are not* culture

23

Western Cultures

- ◆ Outstripping biology
 - Ecological problems & disasters
- ◆ People are surrounded by their own creations
- ◆ The natural environment is alien

24

Western Cultures

- ◆ Technologically and cultural “incestuous”
- ◆ Positive feedback system
- ◆ Unstable, prone to extremism

25

Web Links of Interest:

- ◆ Physical Anthropology:
<http://www2.lib.udel.edu/subj/anth/phys/internet.htm>
- ◆ Paleoanthropology Links
<http://www.talkorigins.org/faqs/homs/links.html>
- ◆ Hominid Species:
<http://www.talkorigins.org/faqs/homs/species.html>
<http://www.he.net/~archaeol/9603/newsbriefs/hominid.html>
- ◆ Alternative views to evolution: “Creation Science” & “Intelligent Design”
<http://emporium.turnpike.net/C/cs/index.htm>
<http://www.discovery.org/>
<http://www.venganza.org/>
- ◆ “Technological or Media Determinism” by Daniel Chandler
<http://www.aber.ac.uk/media/Documents/tecdet/tecdet.html>

26

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- ◆ Information content based in part upon lectures given in June, 1993, by:
Dr. Anthony Cavender, ETSU Dept. of Sociology and Anthropology
& Dr. John Ephriam, ETSU Department of Technology
- ◆ Hero’s Steam Engine and Temple Door Opening Images from:
The Growth of the Steam-Engine, Chapter I by R. H. Thurston, AM,CE;
<http://www.history.rochester.edu/steam/thurston/1878/Chapter1.html>
- ◆ Hominid images from:
“Anthropology 1101 HUMAN ORIGINS Website”
<http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Acropolis/5579/TA.html>
Australopithecus africanus:
<http://www.ed.uiuc.edu/students/b-sklar/africanus.html>
Homo Erectus (“Turkana Boy”)
<http://www.talkorigins.org/faqs/homs/15000.html>

27
