

The Webs of Significance Contents

Contents

Part I. What Is *Human Language*?

	1
1. Language, Thought & Cognition	
1.1 Physical Senses vs. Abstract Thought (Generalization)	1
1.2 The Symbolic Species	2
1.3 Symbols (iconic & arbitrary; aural & visual)	4
2. What is thinking? An enquiry concerning human understanding	5
2.1 Dialectical vs. Metaphysical Ways of Thinking	9
2.2 The Learning Process	11
2.3 The Measure of Truth	12
3. Language – the tool societies use to weave ‘webs of significance’	13
3.1 Generalization Is the Mechanism of Our ‘Thinking Tool’ – Language	14
3.2 How do we acquire language?	17
3.3 Piaget’s stages of cognitive development	18
3.4 Ambiguity: Lexical vs. Structural	21
	23

Part II. Culture and Enculturation

1. What Is Culture?	27
1.1. Dialectical vs. the Metaphysical view of Culture	30
1.2. Historical development of Culture	31
1.3. The invention of writing and cultural development	32
2. Enculturation – the Formatting of Our Minds	36
2.1. Sources of Enculturation	36
2.2. Self-Concept - Ego	37
2.3. Culture and Identity: The Force behind Our Thoughts	40
2.4. Human Nature & Maslow’s Pyramid of Human Needs	41
3. Cultures of the World: ‘High-context’ vs. ‘Low-context’ cultures	44
3.1. Why are some cultures ‘high’ context, and others – ‘low’ context?	45
3.2. Context Is a Relative Metric of Culture	47
3.3. Subcultures (community thinking & behavior)	48
3.4. Why are cultures so different, if the mechanism of human thought and all basic human needs are universal?	48
4. Language, Race & Culture	57
4.1. Language and Identity: the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis	59
4.2. Theories of Relationship between Language, Race & Culture	61
4.3. Cultural, ethnic and linguistic boundaries are not the same	62
4.4. Race & Language need not correspond	63
4.5. Cultural & linguistic boundaries are not the same	65

The Webs of Significance Contents

Part III. Forces that Shape Culture

1. Physical Environment & Culture	68
1.1 Geographical Determinism	72
2. Social Psyche & Culture: Value – the foundation of Culture	80
2.1 Society – a ‘series of exchanges’	81
2.2 Dialectical view of society: Marxist Theory	84
2.3 Socio-economic orders	87
3. Ideology & Culture	
3.1 Superstition/Religion & Culture	101
3.2 It’s in the way we think – we are natural ‘dualists’	102
3.3 Clash of Two Aggressive Religions – a historical snapshot	104
3.4 Ideology – the product of human minds	108
3.5 On Social/Cultural Differences	110

Part IV. Papua New Guinea – Yesterday, Today, & Tomorrow

1. PNG Timeline: Chronology of Key Events	112
2. A snapshot of Melanesia	115
3. DEBATE TIME!!!	118
Kastom & Modernity – What do U think about (i) Gender Inequality, (ii) Bride Price, (iii) Witchcraft, Sorcery, & Christianity in Papua New Guinea today?	

Some Webs ‘appended’:

Appendix I	119
Reading 1: Aristotle’s Metaphysics Book I	120
Reading 2: The Human Paradox	123
Reading 3: On Dialectics	129
Reading 4: David Hume: Of Human Nature	133
Reading 5: On Generalization: Genesutra 5	136
Appendix II	
Reading 1: David Hume: On Morals	154
Reading 2: Nora Vagi Brash	164
Reading 3: Otto Nekitel: Voices of Yesterday, Today & Tomorrow	176
Appendix III	
Reading 1: Diamond: Guns, Germs & Steel	192
Reading 2: Society – the Foundry of Human Minds	203
Reading 3: The Crusades	216
Reading 4: Economic Delusion	220
Appendix IV. Debate Time!	224

The Webs of Significance Contents