



# Defining “culture” and cultural anthropology

Howard Culbertson  
Southern Nazarene University

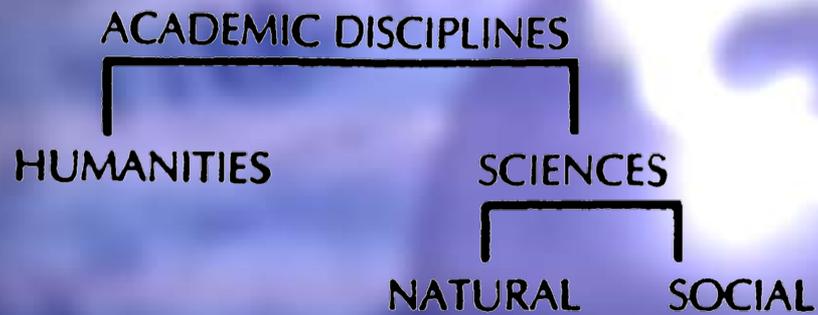
- “A few years ago I took a cultural anthropology class at a community college. This class studied people in great detail but never really mentioned what culture was. We assumed we were studying culture, but the [word culture] was never truly defined.”

- A student in Global Evangelism class

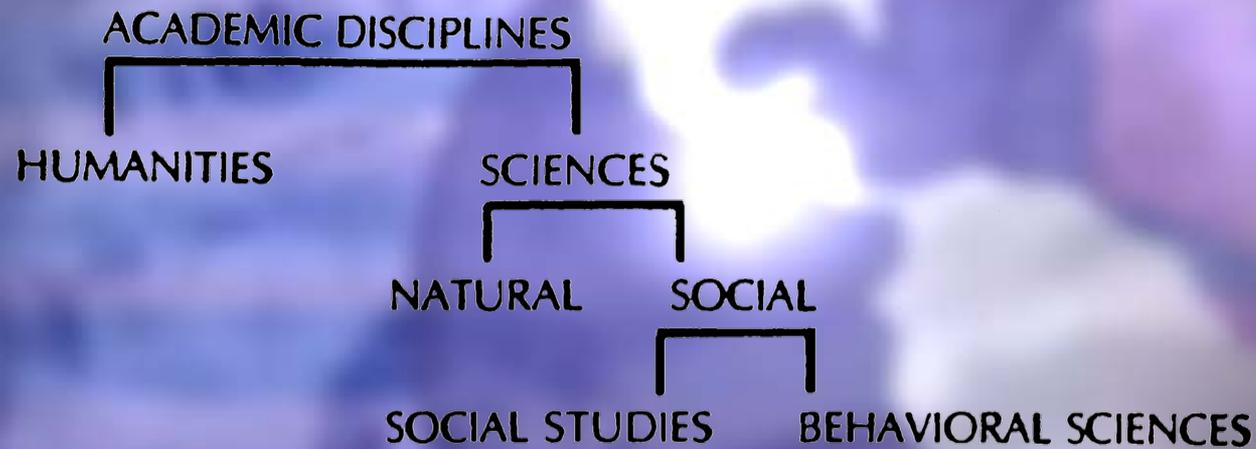
# Cultural Anthropology -- an academic discipline



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**Culture is  
what makes  
you a stranger  
when you are  
away from  
home**

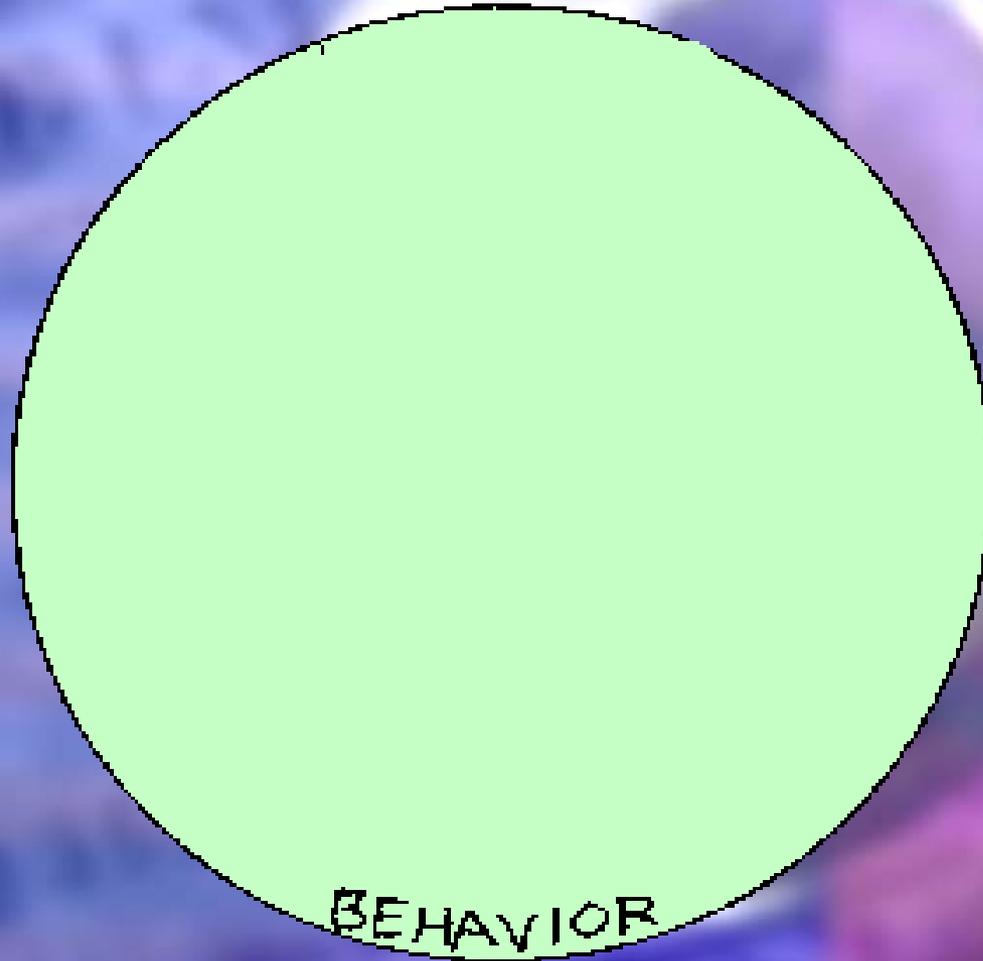


# Defining culture

1. Philip Bock – What makes you a stranger when you're away from home
2. Ruth Benedict – learned patterns
3. Charles Kraft – Complex, integrated coping mechanism
4. Bob Sjogren -- What makes us “us” and them “them”

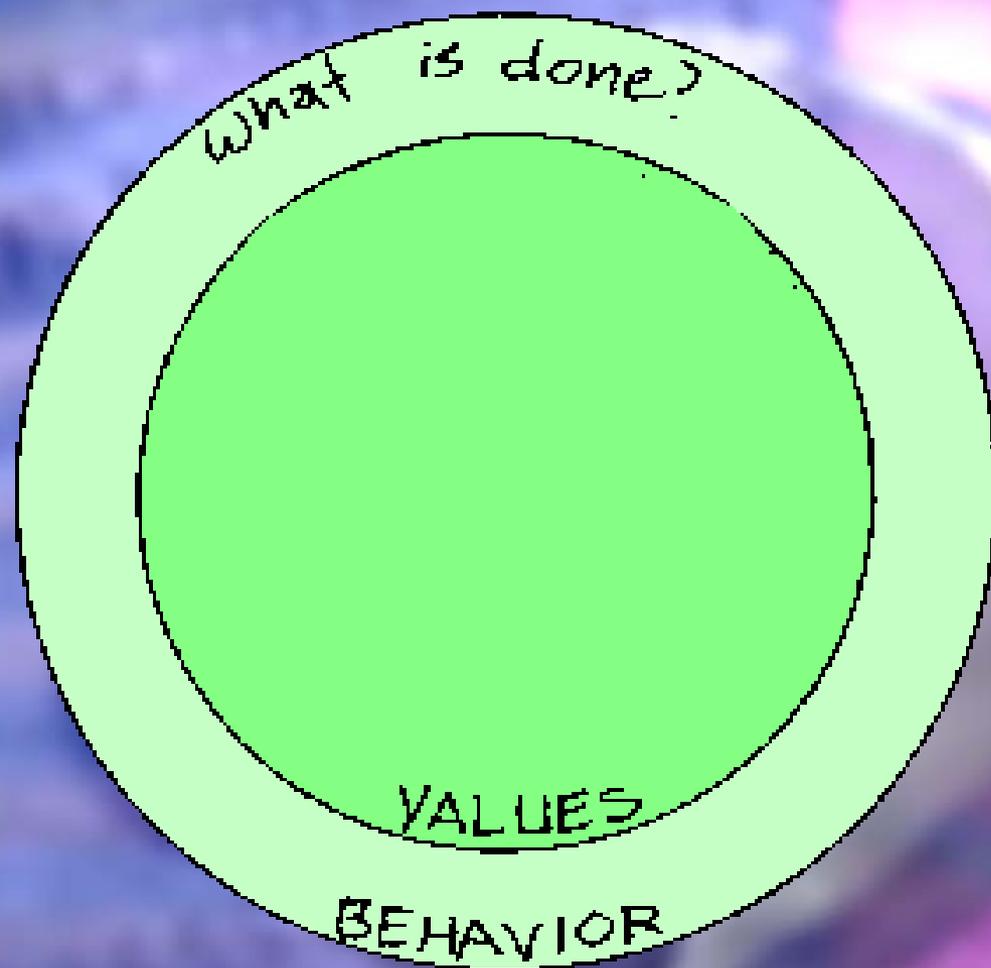
# Viewing culture as successive levels

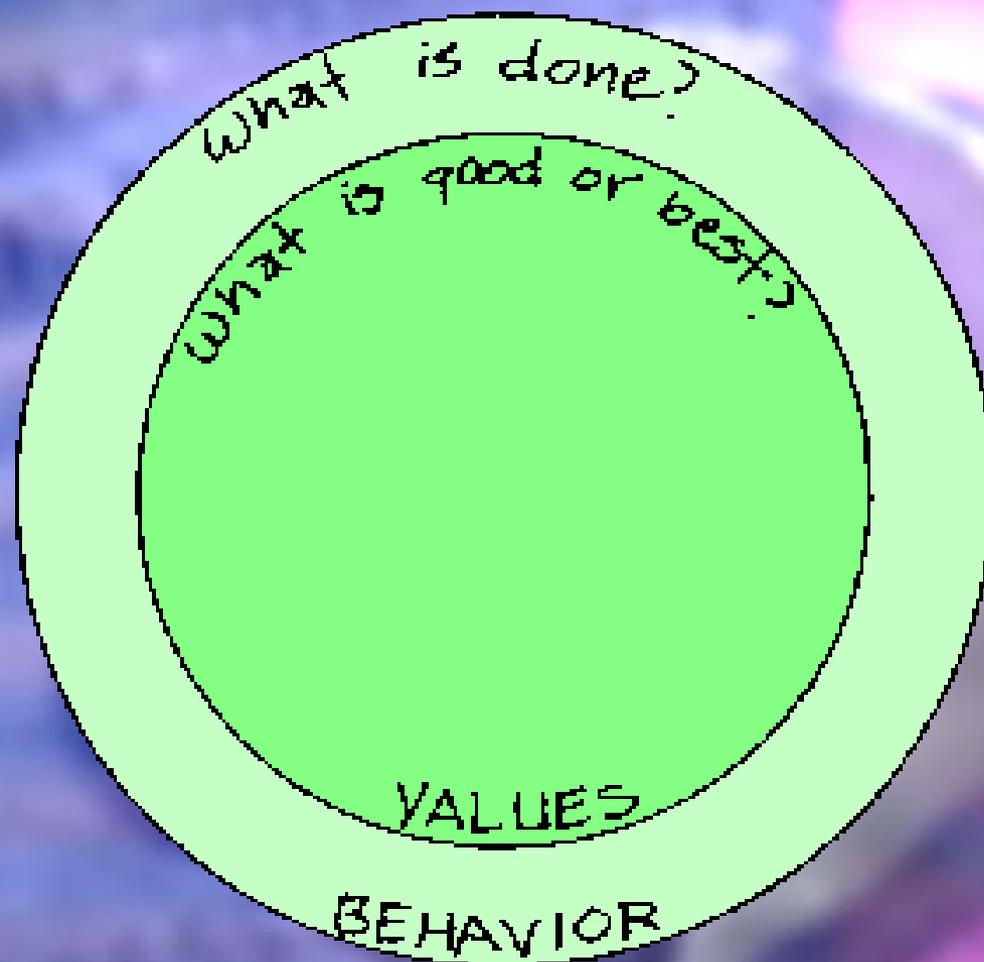
Diagram by Lloyd Kwast

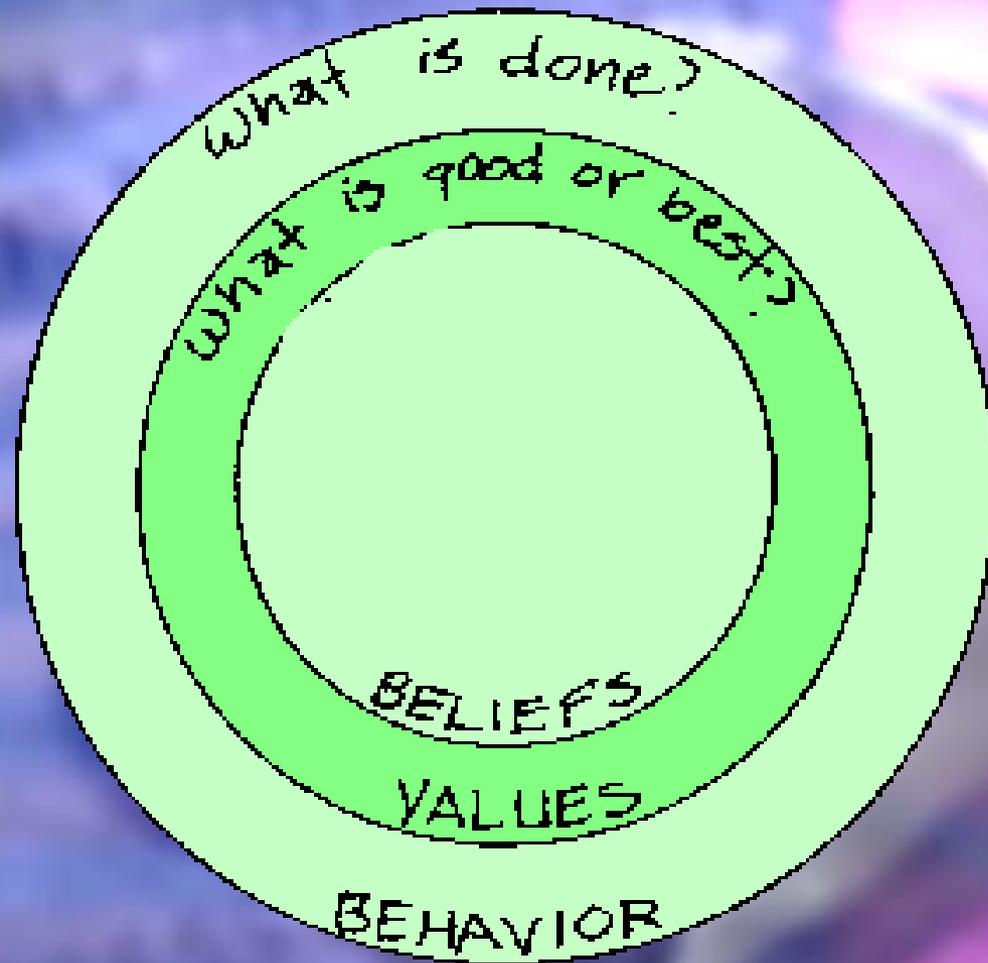


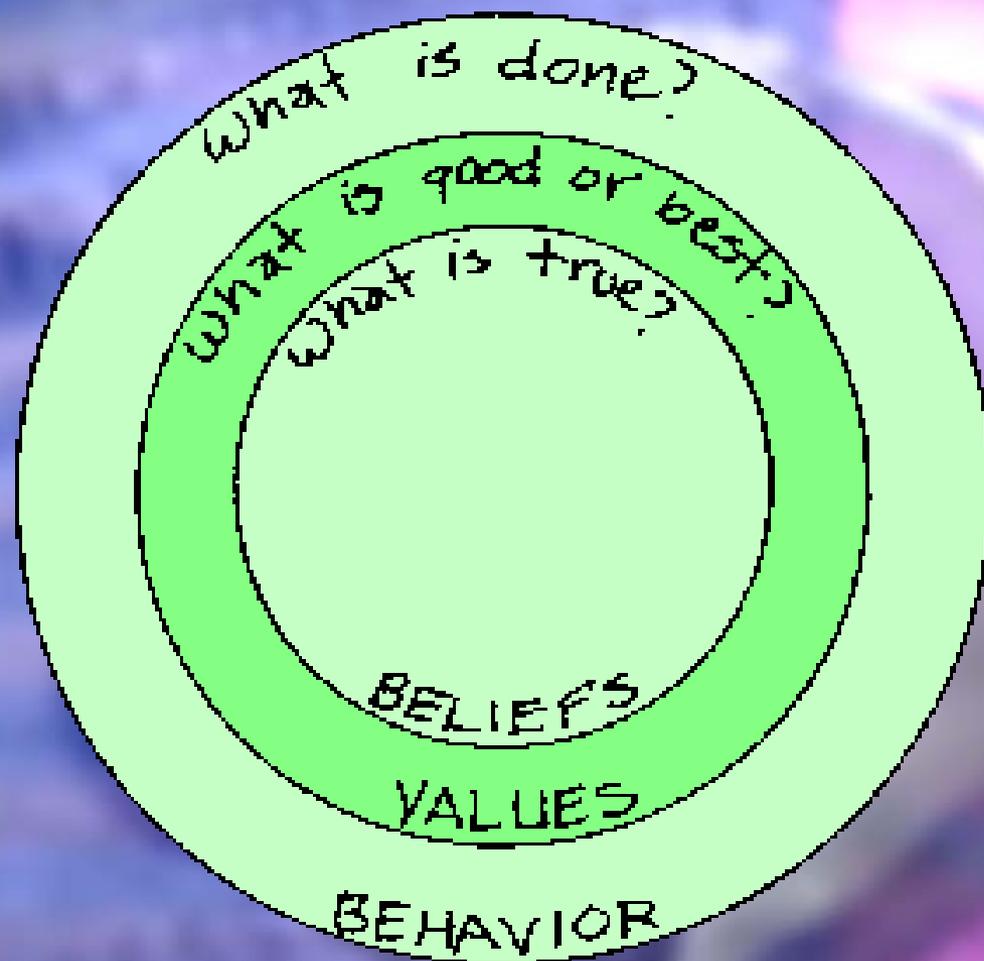
What is done?

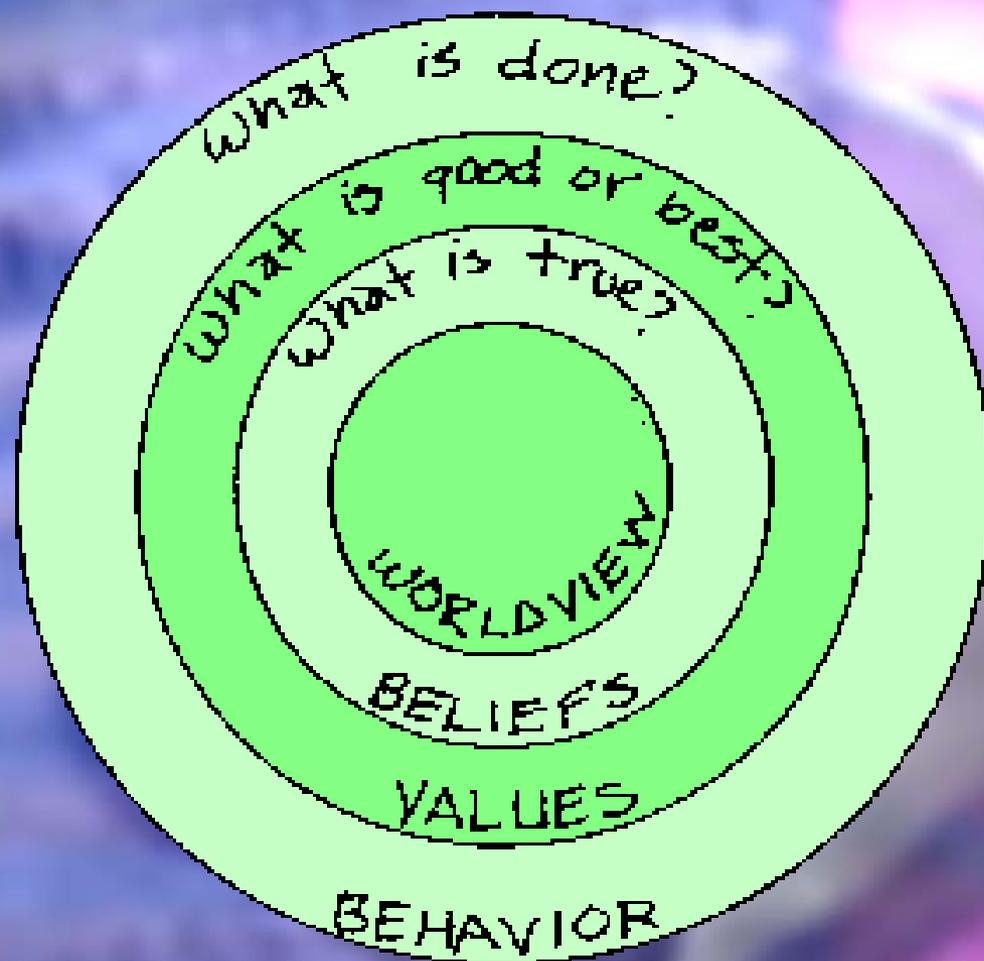
BEHAVIOR

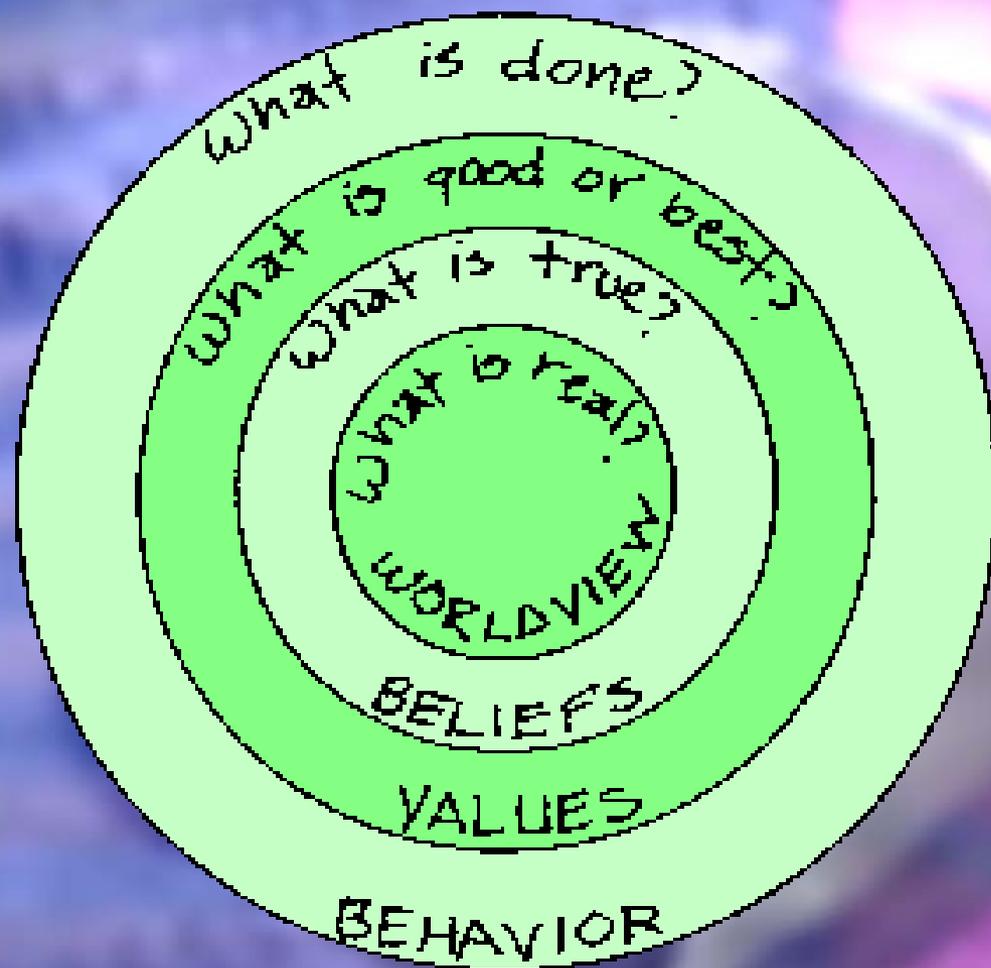




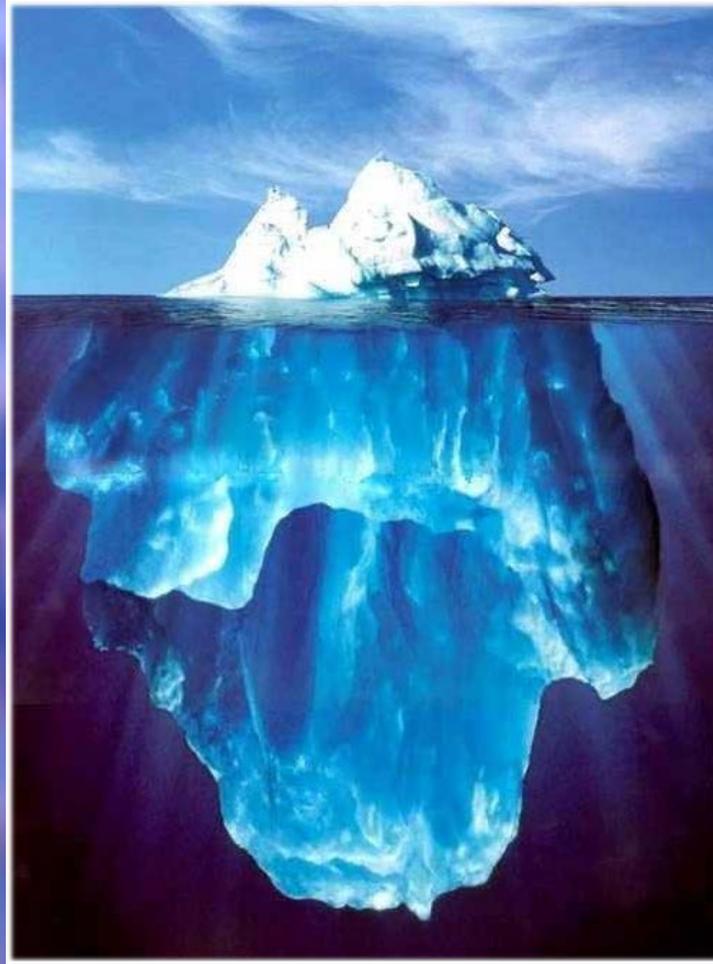




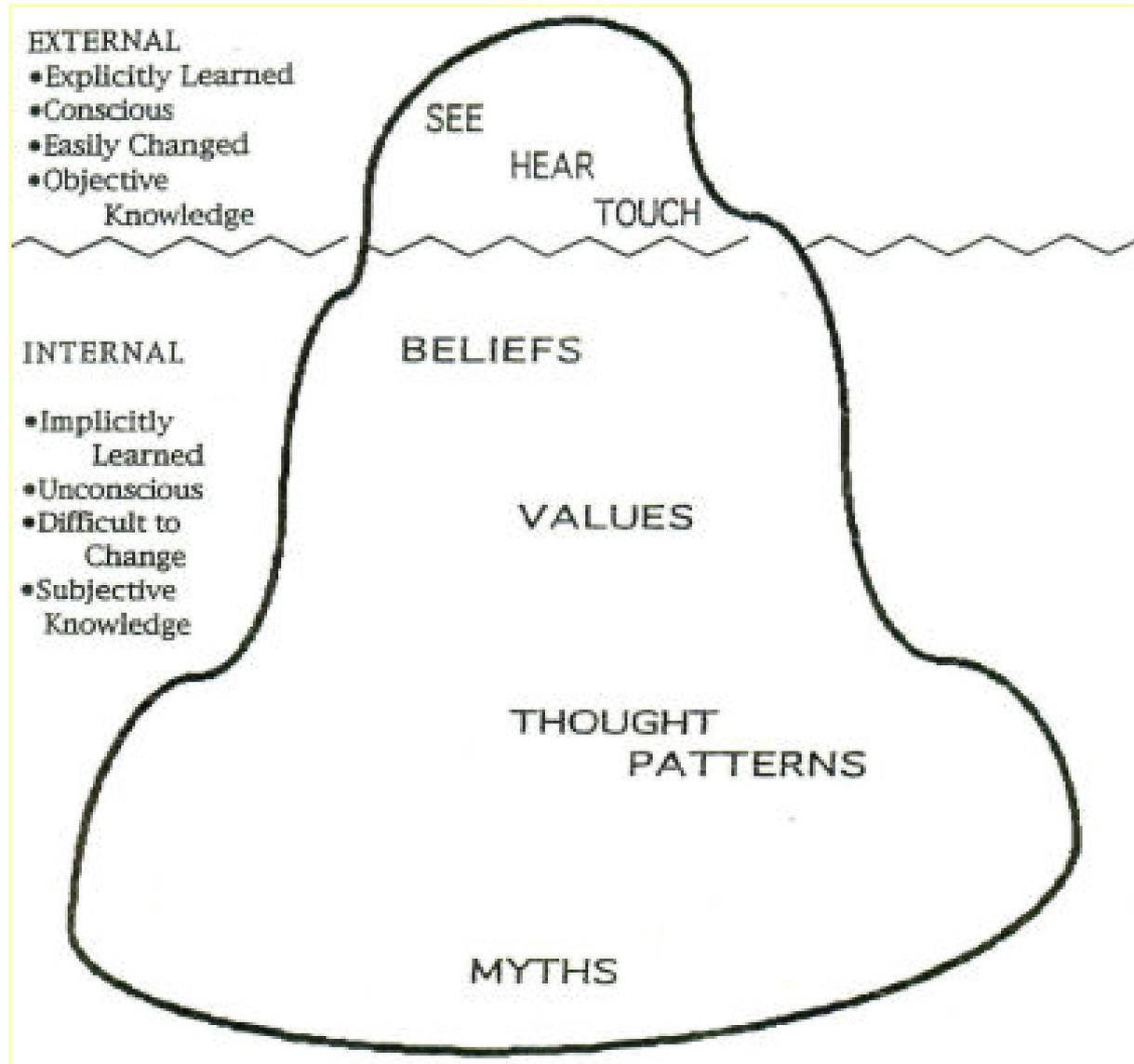




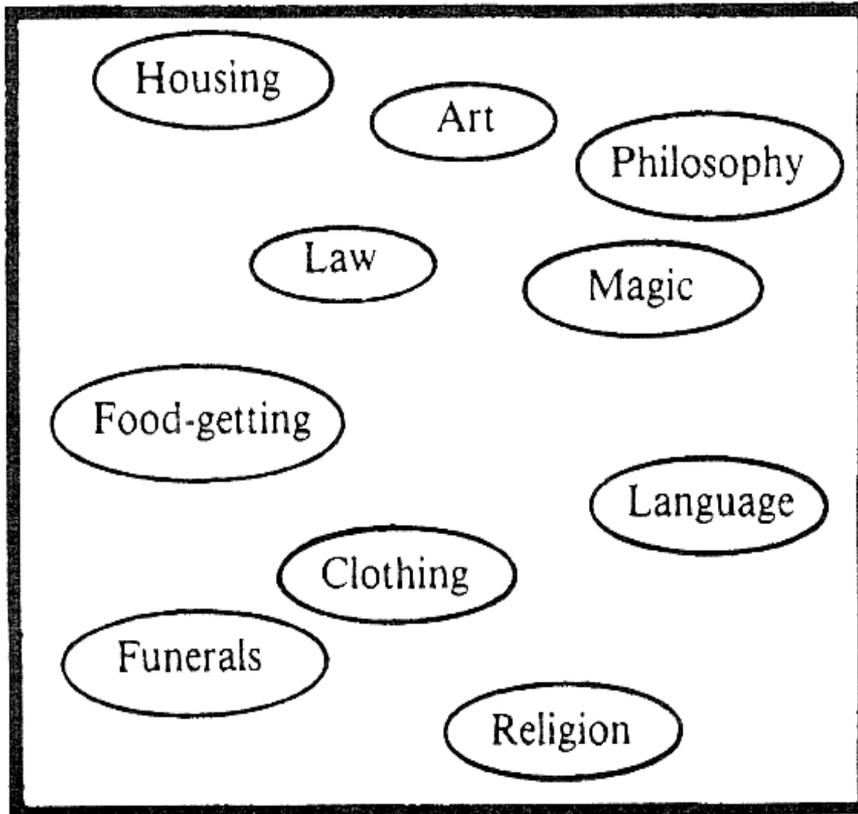
# An iceberg as an analogy of culture



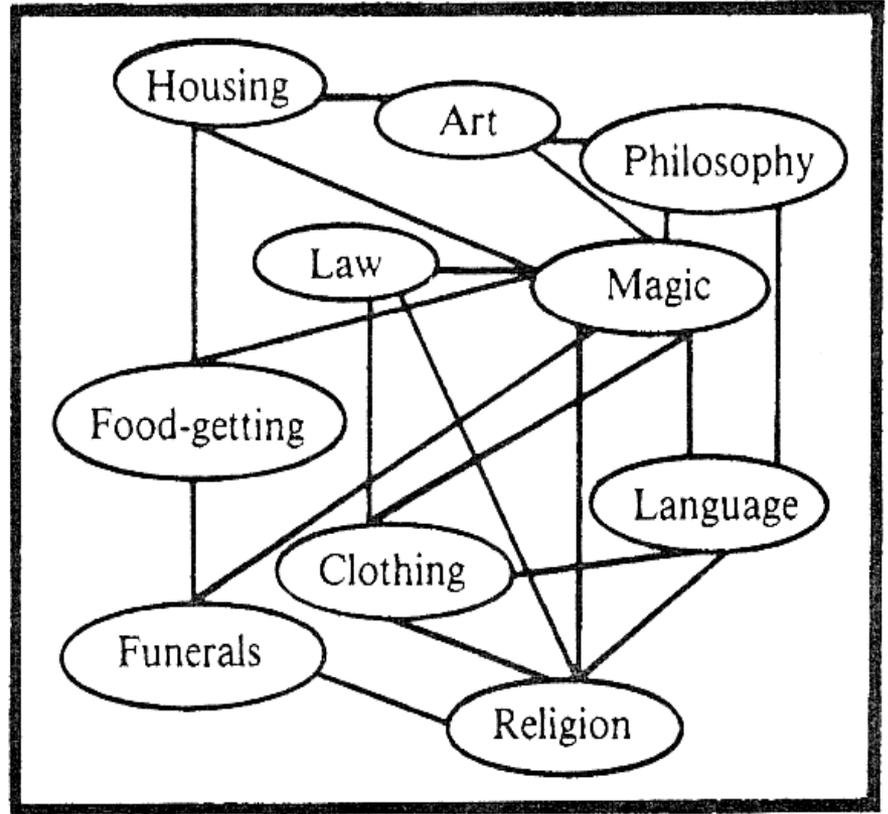
From Gary Weaver in *Culture, Communication and Conflict: Readings in Intercultural Relations*



# *A “Photographic” vs. a “Functional” Description of Culture*



“photographic”



“functional”

# **Culture is a complex, integrated coping mechanism.**

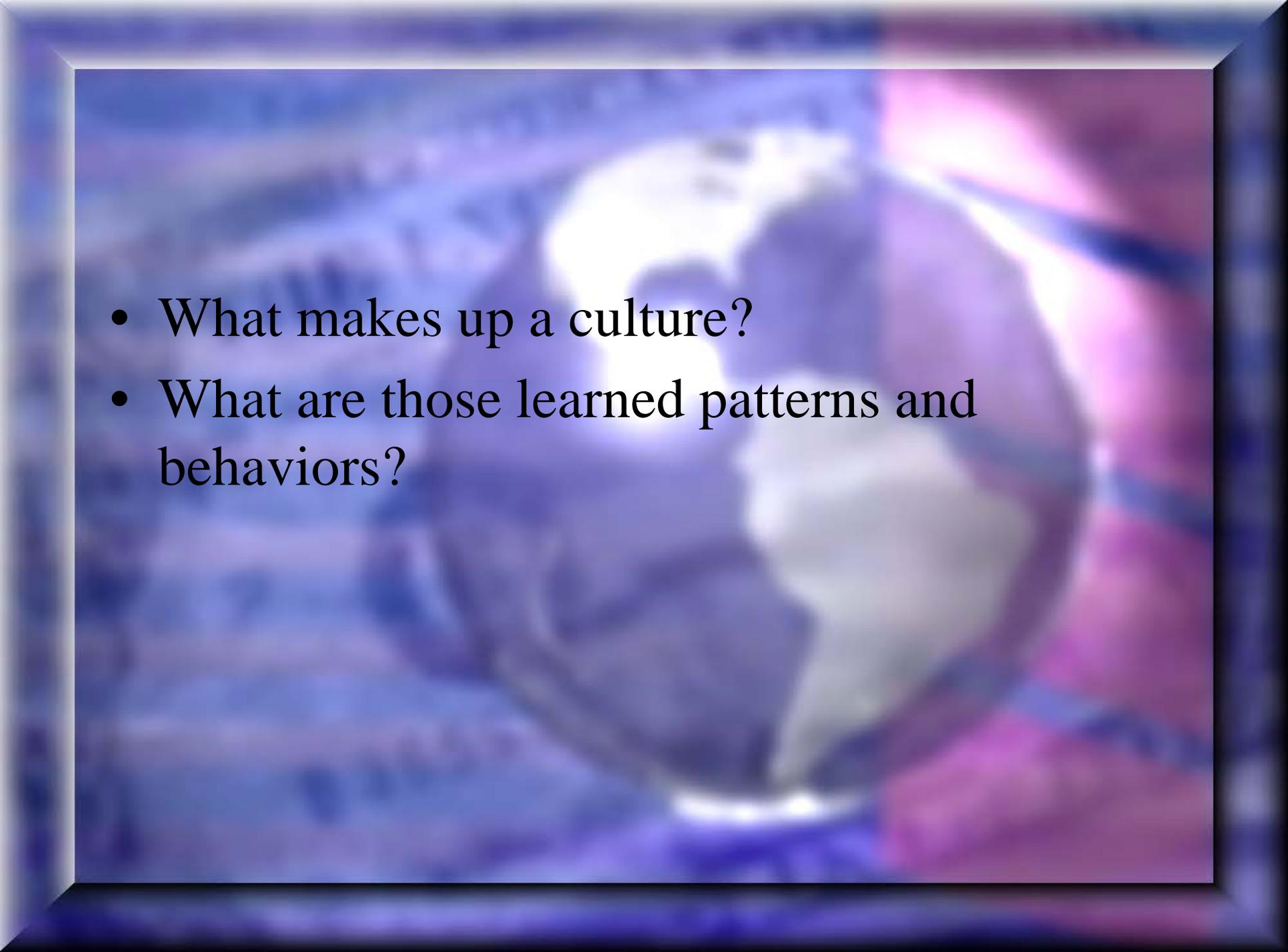
Culture consists of

1. Learned concepts and behavior
2. Underlying perspectives (worldview)
3. Resulting products
  - nonmaterial (customs and rituals)
  - material (artifacts)

– Chuck Kraft's definition

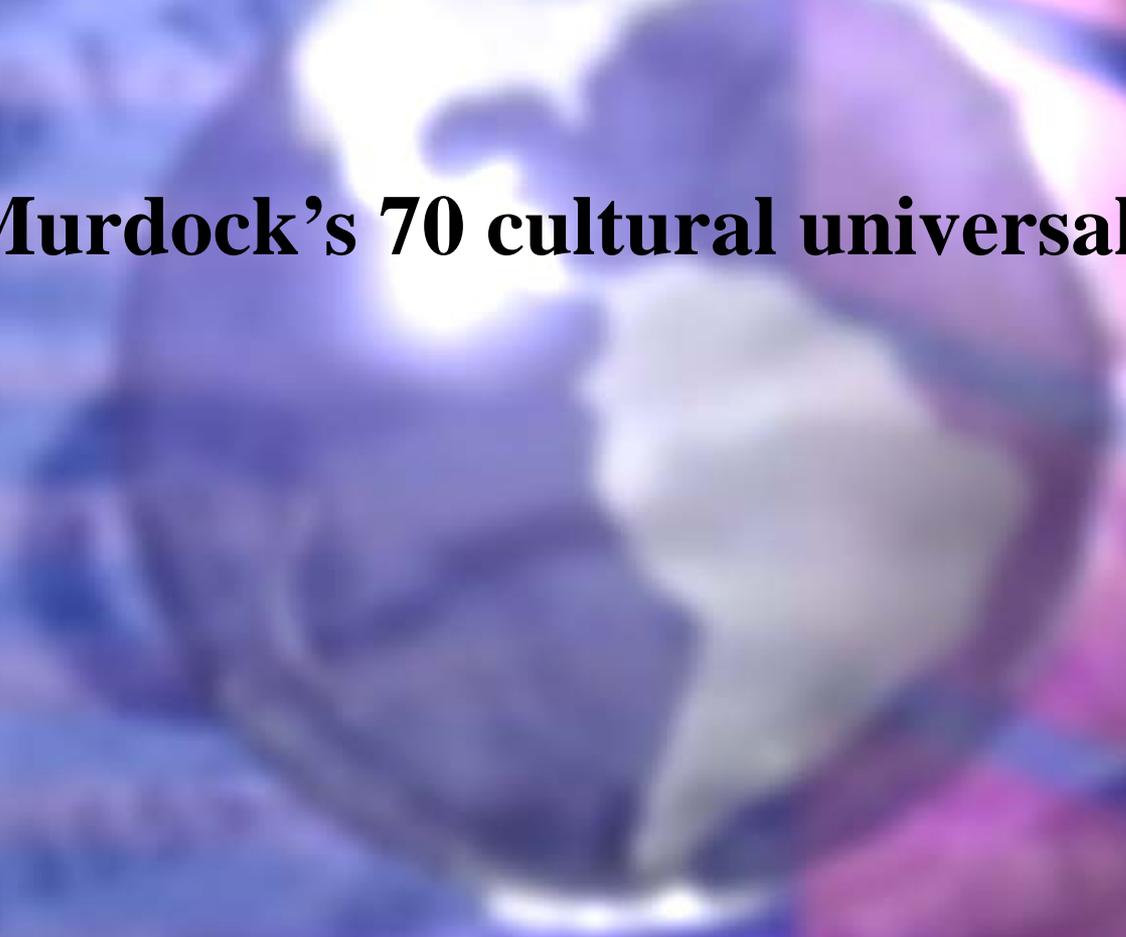
# Scattered thoughts about Cultural Anthropology

- It's holistic (as opposed to atomistic or narrow)
- It's comparative
  - Etic (from outsider's vantage point)
  - Emic (from an insider's vantage point)
- Perspectives run the gamut from relativism to ethnocentrism
- You will get your hands dirty (fieldwork)

- 
- What makes up a culture?
  - What are those learned patterns and behaviors?

# **Cultural Universals**

**George Murdock's 70 cultural universals**



age-grading  
athletic sports  
bodily adornment  
calendar  
cleanliness training  
community  
organization  
cooking  
co-operative labor  
cosmology  
courtship  
dancing  
decorative art  
divination  
division of labor  
dream interpretation  
education  
eschatology

ethics  
ethno-botany  
etiquette  
faith healing  
family  
feasting  
fire-making  
folklore  
food taboos  
funeral rites  
games  
gestures  
gift-giving  
government  
greetings  
hair styles  
hospitality

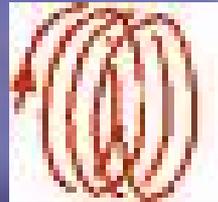
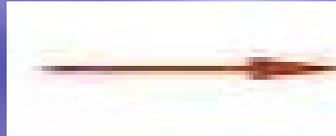
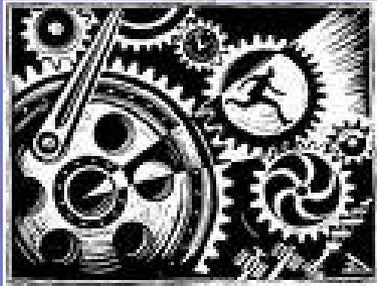
housing  
hygiene  
incest taboos  
inheritance rules  
joking  
kin groups  
kinship  
nomenclature  
language  
law  
luck / superstitions  
magic  
marriage  
mealtimes  
medicine  
obstetrics  
penal sanctions  
personal names

population policy  
postnatal care  
pregnancy usages  
property rights  
propitiation of  
supernatural beings  
puberty customs  
religious ritual  
residence rules  
sexual restrictions  
soul concepts  
status differentiation  
surgery  
tool-making  
trade  
visiting  
weather control  
weaving

# 9 cultural universals



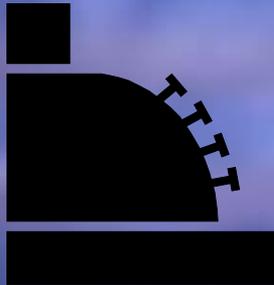
# 1. Place and time



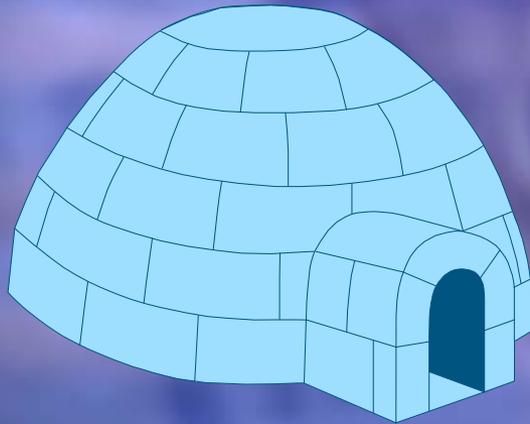
# 2. Family life



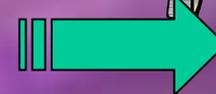
# 3. Economics



# 4. Food, clothing, shelter and transportation



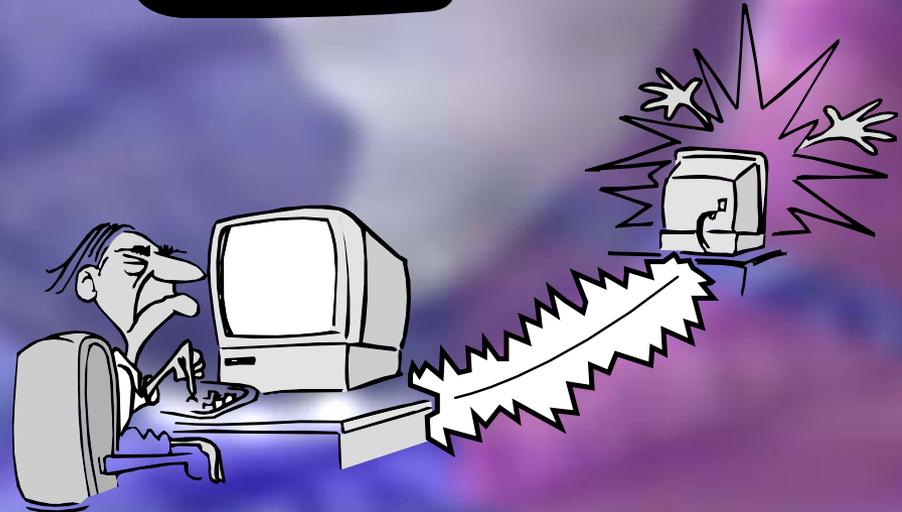
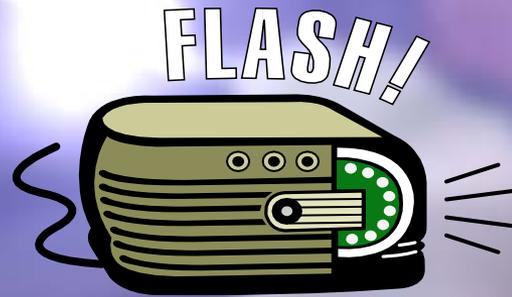
See note



# Note: “Drives” vs. culture

- Hunger is a basic human psycho-biological drive.
- *How* that hunger is satisfied involves all kinds of cultural things (what is eaten, how it is prepared, how it is eaten . . .).

# 5. Communication



# 6. Government



# 7. Arts and recreation



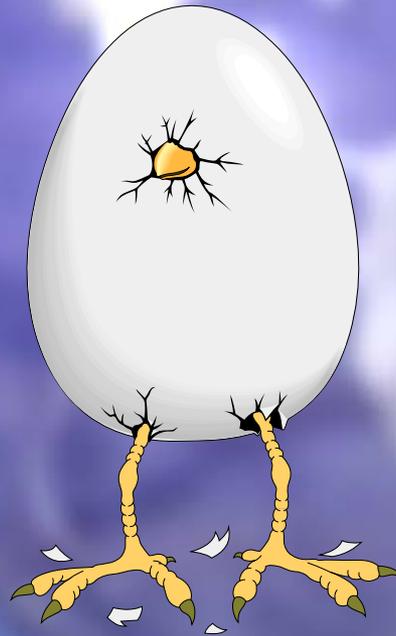
# 8. Education



# 9. Quest for the supernatural

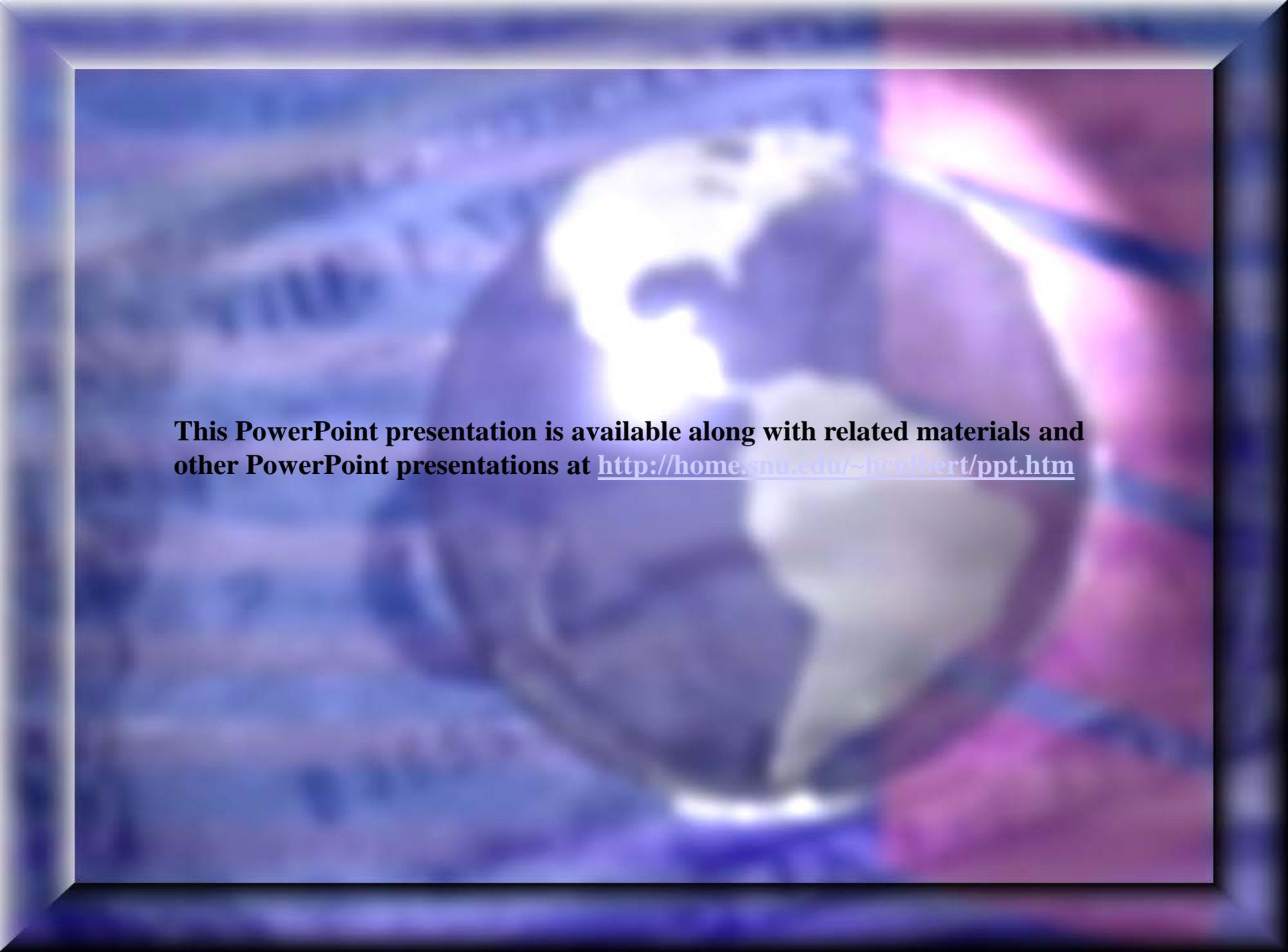


# Sociocultural change



# Is it worth my time?

- Question: Why study cultural anthropology?
- Answer: To enrich a college education by giving new insights about ourselves and our own cultural context as well as stretching our imaginations.



**This PowerPoint presentation is available along with related materials and other PowerPoint presentations at <http://home.snu.edu/~heulbert/ppt.htm>**