

MA in Cultural Astronomy and Astrology
Introduction to Cultural Astronomy and Astrology
Week 1: Culture and Cosmos
Optional Reading
Nick Campion

The optional reading in culture is extensive, as you will find if you search for the word. However, the material which deals effectively with the nature of the word is quite limited. This is an advantage when it comes to targeted reading.

Tylor, Edward Burnett, *Primitive Culture*, 3 Vols., (London: John Murray 1920 [1871]), Vol. I, chaps 1, 2.

PDFs posted on Week 1

Of all the optional reading, Tylor's is the most 'required', and it is included as a seminal historical piece, still very influential, if discredited amongst anthropologists. Tylor is often considered the first to have discussed the concept of 'culture', and he established now controversial the notion that sophisticated (i.e. modern, western) cultures evolved from 'primitive' (i.e. non-western, ancient, pre-modern) ones. Few anthropologists now accept Tylor's model, and it has become customary to discover the sophistication that was previously overlooked in 'primitive' cultures. However, the Tylorian model remains very strong amongst scientific sceptics who adopt a historical model in which astrology is an anachronistic legacy of primitive culture, and its existence in the modern world therefore becomes a problem to be explained.

Benedict, Ruth, *Patterns of Culture*, New York: Mentor, 1946, chap 2 (pp. 19-40). Benedict was one of the new wave of anthropologists in the 1940s who were moving away from value-laden evolutionist notions of 'primitive' versus advanced cultures. She is also representative of those anthropologists who considered all behavioural traits to be linked to culture

GOOGLE BOOKS: See Link on Moodle page

Geertz, Clifford, 'Religion as a Cultural System', in Religion as a Cultural System, in: Banton, Michael P. (ed.): *Anthropological approaches to the study of religion*. London/UK 1966: Tavistock and New York: Frederick A. Praeger Press, 1966, pp. 1-46.

GOOGLE BOOKS: See Link on Moodle page

Geertz, Clifford, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, New York: Basic Books, 1973, Chapter 1: 'Toward An Interpretative Theory of Culture',
 See Link on Moodle page

Kern, Stephen, *The Culture of Time and Space 1880-1918*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press 1983, chap 1 (pp. 10-35).

Kern's writing is fairly dense, but thought-provoking.

PDF

This is also on GOOGLE BOOKS: See Link on Moodle page

http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=Co7ipk-yOs0C&pg=PA10&source=gbs_toc_r&cad=3#v=onepage&q&f=false

Kuper, Adam, *Culture: The Anthropologists Account*, Cambridge Mass.; Harvard University Press, 1999, 'Introduction', pp 1-8.

PDF

This is also on GOOGLE BOOKS

http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=lls139Ru0lkC&pg=PA1&source=gbs_toc_r&cad=4#v=onepage&q&f=false

Pingree, David, 'Hellenophilia versus the History of Science', *ISIS* 1991, Vol. 83, pp. 554-563.

JSTOR

David Pingree was one of the most important historians of astrology in the 20th century, and you will encounter his work in a number of modules. In this article he criticises the assumption that classical Greek culture was automatically superior to the cultures of surrounding areas, such as Egypt and Mesopotamia. These are very important considerations for understanding how the history of astrology has been written and the assumptions underlying it.

Rochberg, Francesca, 'Special Section: The Cultures of Ancient Science, Introduction', *Isis*, Vol. 83, No. 4. (Dec., 1992), pp. 547-553.

JSTOR

Rochberg is one of the foremost scholars of Babylonian astrology and a critic of the idea of a firm separation between Babylonian and Greek culture in the ancient world.

The two articles by Pingree and Rochberg are both critical of the orthodox view in which western culture, especially its science, is derived from ancient Greece, and the way in which this view has shaped modern cultural assumptions. There is a connection here with Edward Said's theory of 'orientalism', which states, briefly, that western culture tends to despise or fear the 'oriental'. Although Pingree and Rochberg didn't discuss Said, as 'orientalists' of a kind – Mesopotamian scholars, they are conscious of the prevailing assumptions which influence the culture of academia.

There is a huge amount of reading you could pursue if you wish. If you can track the following two down, then you will be expanding your reading in useful directions.

Huxley, Thomas Edward, 'Science and Culture', from *Science and Education*, Appleton-Century-Crofts Inc., 1893, in Martin Gardner, *Great Essays in Science*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 1985, pp. 130-148.

E BOOK UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

Ingold, Tim, "Hunting and Gathering as Ways of Perceiving the Environment" pp. 40-60 in Tim Ingold, *The Perception of the Environment* (London: Routledge, 2000).

E BOOK UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

Additional Reading

George W. Stocking, Jr., 'Franz Boas and the Culture Concept in Historical Perspective', *American Anthropologist*, New Series, Vol. 68, No. 4 (Aug., 1966), pp. 867-882.
JSTOR

Weiss, Dieter, 'Culture, Perception of Reality, and the Newly Emerging Planning Paradigm', *Social Indicators Research* 16 (1985): 201-211
JSTOR

Weiss, Gerald, 'A Scientific Concept of Culture', *American Anthropologist* (1972): 1376-1413.
JSTOR

Hsu, Francis L K, 'Rethinking the Concept "Primitive"', *Current Anthropology*, June 1964, vol. 5, no. 3, pp 196-97.
JSTOR

Nederman, Cary J., and James Wray Goulding, 'Popular occultism and Critical Social Theory: Exploring Some Themes in Adorno's Critique of Astrology and the Occult', *Sociological Analysis*, Vol. 42, No. 4 (Winter, 1981), pp. 325-332
JSTOR

Wood, Brennon, 'Stuart Hall's Cultural Studies and the Problems of Hegemony', *The British Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 49, No. 3 (Sep., 1998), pp. 399-414
JSTOR

Culture web sites

Sociology of Culture - resources

<http://www.sociosite.net/topics/culture.php#WEBCULTURE>

Popular Culture

Useful introductory books which you can borrow or buy if you wish to explore popular culture, include:

During, Simon (ed.), *The Cultural Studies Reader*, London: Routledge, 1993.

Storey, John, *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: An Introduction*, Edinburgh: Pearson Education Ltd., 2001.

Strinati, Dominic, *An Introduction to Theories of Popular Culture*, London: Routledge 1995.

Fiske, John, *Understanding Popular Culture*, London: Routledge, 2001.

Other classic texts, which preceded the development of modern Cultural Studies include,

Leavis F.R., *Mass Civilisation and Minority Culture*, London: Folcroft 1930.

Williams, Raymond, *Culture and Society 1780-1950*, London: Pelican 1971.