

# FROM THE DESK OF DAVID L. SCHUTZER

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## 102 Honors Mid–Term Questions

1. Define Holism.
2. Discuss the characteristics of participant–observation and what this method contributes to ethnographic understanding.
3. How are modern definitions of culture different from 19th–century definitions?
4. Contrast ethnocentrism and cultural relativism.
5. Using the Amish as an example of subcultural variation, discuss some of the factors that seem to determine whether or not subcultural variation is tolerated by the larger culture. Compare the Amish with another group less well tolerated.
6. What is the difference between a signal and a symbol?
7. Give examples of how the analysis of vocabulary can tell us what is important in a culture.
8. How is language linked to gender? Use examples from the text and add some of your own.
9. Explain and critique the Whorfian hypothesis.
10. Who are the agents of enculturation?
- 11 Explain the difference between "market exchange" and "marketplace" by describing the flea markets which are common today in North American society.
12. Why do North Americans spend so much time and energy trying to impress one another with the latest in consumer goods ("keeping up with the Joneses")?
13. Describe cargo systems as they operate in many Mayan villages and towns in the highlands of Mexico and Guatemala. What does a man gain by participating in such a system? What function does it serve in the community?
14. Distinguish generalized, balanced, and negative reciprocity. What do they have in common, and how are they different? Give examples of each.
15. Your text says that the Western notion of progress is a culturally conditioned bias. Explain this statement, and discuss how this bias affects our interpretation of hunting-and-gathering societies.

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16. Explain the relationship between prolonged nursing of infants and reduced birth rate. Using the evidence that increased exercise (such as daily running) has an effect on rate of ovulation, can you speculate about what the effect of a mobile hunting-and-gathering way of life might have on rate of births, and what the effect on birth rate might be if a hunting-and-gathering population settled down to practice farming instead?

17. Your text says that hunting is almost universally a male occupation. Are there biological reasons for this? Does this mean that women play an insignificant role in hunting and gathering societies?