



Religion

- **Religio: “to bind”**

- Understand the perplexing questions of life
- Gives something to look forward to
- Social control?
 - “opiate of the masses”

•Monotheism:

•Dominated by "Abrahamic" religions

•Christianity & Judaism: progenitor; God made promises to numberless descendants & control of "Promised Land" in return for accepting "YHWH"

•Islam: Prophet & Muhammad is his descendant

creator



- Polytheism:

- Hinduism—pantheon

- Pantheons often "humanize" gods

- Brahma—creator; had 5 heads—lost 1 b/c he was "womanizing"
 - Vishnu—protector of creation; merciful; has 9 avatars born to vanquish negative forces
 - Shiva—destroyer; responsible for change; perfect goodness; self-controlled
 - Ganesh—"remover of obstacles"; patron of arts & sciences; revered for intelligence



Agnosticism: existence or non-existence of god is unknowable

Animism: All things have a spirit; often human; capable of helping/hurting humanity

Eschatology: Study of the ultimate destiny of mankind

Nihilism: belief that all beliefs are unfounded and that life has no meaning

Profane: not holy

Secular: worldly and not sacred

Supernatural: outside of the natural world

Creation & Destruction Myths

- Creation myth: supernatural story about beginnings of humanity, earth, life, and universe
- Destruction myth: supernatural prediction about the end of humanity and possible saving of the righteous

● Bakuba (Congo)

- World was water & darkness
- Mbombo (white giant) ruled over “chaos”
- Terrible pain in stomach—vomited stars, sun, and moon
 - Heat of sun dried up water and steam created clouds
- Mbombo vomited again when hills appeared
 - Vomited animals, people, fire, and medicine



- Maori (Polynesia)

- Ranginui (sky father)
- Papatuanuku (Earth mother)
 - Tight “embrace”
 - Children born and lived in darkness of the embrace
 - Children grew and separated mom and dad
 - Father cries for mother
 - Mother mists for father



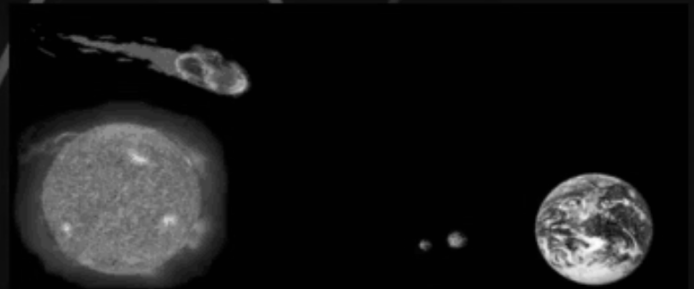
- Ancient Greeks and the creation of woman
 - Pandora's Box

Destruction Myth

- **Book of Revelation**
 - Last book of the New Testament
 - Story of the coming apocalypse
 - Interpreted in COUNTLESS ways
 - Rapture: saving of the righteous and the damning of the wicked
 - Angels release 7 plagues (wrath of God)
 - “Babylon” is destroyed

Mayan 2012 Apocalypse

- Mayan calendar runs out December 21st, 2012





Communication w/ Supernatural

- Priest/shaman/witchdoctor
 - Intermediary
 - Distinguished by special appearances
 - Special training often needed
 - Preaching/teaching often necessary
 - Physical, emotional, or spiritual "healers"



- **Prayer/meditation**

- Thanks & requests
- Special stances
 - Buddhist Lotus Position 
 - Muslim Full Body Prostration
 - Must face Mecca 
- Special gestures






- **Music**

- Instruments, singing, and chanting often thought to “integrate” people and spirits



● Physiological Experiences

- Drugs (peyote) 
- Sleep deprivation
- Fasting (Lent & Ramadan) 
- Flesh mortification (Opus Dei) 

 Plain du Nord Festival in Haiti



Cilice

Types of Mortification

- Sleep w/o a pillow once a week
- Sleep on a board once a week
- No smoking or drinking
- Heroic Minute: kiss the floor when awoken & recite "serviam"
- Drink coffee w/ no sugar/milk
- Toast w/ no butter
- Cold shower every day
- Remain celibate
- Whip themselves
- Wear cilice for 2 hours a day

- **Holy Books:**

- Important myths, rituals, and behaviors from “god” or followers

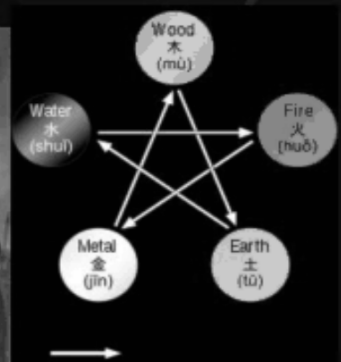
- **Feasts**

- Aborigines: “totem feast”—symbolic cannibalism
- Transubstantiation



● Symbolism:

- Paintings, icons, statues, masks, signs
- Represent compelling ideas
 - Cross, pentagram, swastika, menorah, yin and yang



- **Simulation: imitation of objects to change/predict future**

- Voodoo
- Ouija boards, palm readers
- Oracle of Delphi (Greece)

- Heaven: plain of existence where the truly religious, moral, and pious people exist after death
- Hell: afterlife of suffering and misery of wicked souls



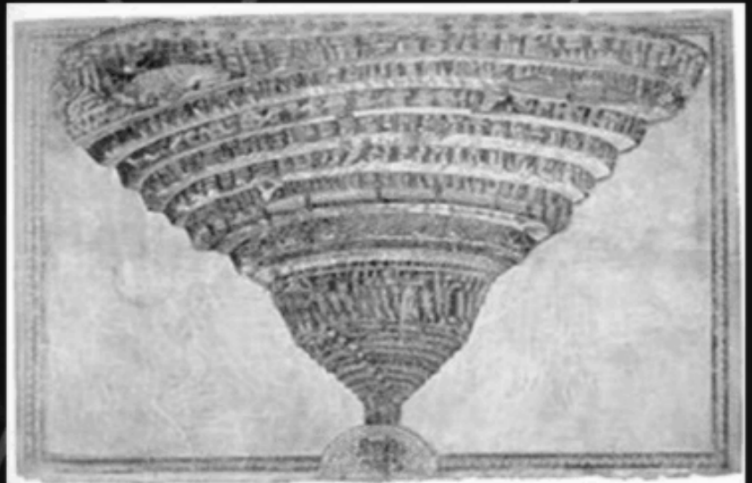
Dante's *Divine Comedy*

- Written by Dante Aligheri in the 1300s
- Mythical trip from hell (inferno) to purgatory and finishes in heaven (paradise)



Inferno

- Gates of Hell read "Abandon all hope, ye who enter here."
- 9 circles of hell—each reserved for a special type of sinner
 - 1st (limbo): unbaptized & virtuous pagans—grieve separation from God
 - 2nd: lust—blown about violently by a storm
 - 3rd: gluttony—forced to lay in mud under cold rain and hail
 - 4th: greediness—constantly push heavy weights



- 5th: wrathful fight each other and the slothful lie gurgling under the water of the river Styx
- Circles 6-9 are located in city of Dis where active sinners are punished
- 6th: heresy—entrapment in burning tombs
- 7th: violent criminals & suicides—either are dipped in a river of boiling blood or sit on a beach of burning sand
- 8th: those guilty of deliberate evil deeds (corrupt politicians, thieves, sorcerers, liars, etc.)—whipping, twisted off heads, bitten by snakes, attacked by sword, being inflicted by diseases
- 9th: traitors (Brutus, Cassius, Judas)—frozen in a lake
 - most wicked traitors sit in mouths of Satan in center of Hell



Purgatory

- Purpose of purgatory is to fix a sin and move towards paradise
- 7 levels of purgatory (one for each deadly sin)
 - Punishments created for sins that fit the crime (gluttonous not allowed to eat or drink)
- Honor system—move towards God whenever you feel you've corrected self

Paradise

- 9 levels of heaven—based off of proximity to God
- 1st-3rd: those that quit priestly vows, did good for fame, or did good for love
- 4th-6th: the wise, those that fought for Christianity, and those that personified justice
- 7th: monks
- 8th: saints
- 9th: angels

Ancient Greek



- Hades: ruler of the underworld
 - Name has become synonymous with hell
- All dead go see Hades and are punished or rewarded
- Need a coin to get into Hades (coin under tongue of dead)
- Poor sit on the banks outside underworld just waiting
- 3-headed dog prevents souls from returning to Earth to haunt
- 7 sections of the underworld for different types of souls

Day of the Dead--Dia de Muertos in Mexico



- Central/Southern Mexico & in other parts of Central/South America
- Oct. 31-Nov. 2
- Focus on family/friend gatherings to pray to remember the dead & help guide them through afterlife
- Families tell stories of the dead so children can learn about their family
- Tradition goes back to Aztecs but has now aligned to Catholic doctrine (All Saints Day)
- **Ofrendas** (altars) w/ pictures, foods, drinks--belief the spirits will consume "spiritual essence" of food
- Visit graves & leave deceased person's possessions--often picnic at grave
- Skulls are central part of decorations/costumes
- Festivals and parades to honor the dead
- Seen as a celebration to help the dead--w/o our help their memory dies and they cease to exist in the "land of the dead"



Hindu

- **Samsara**: cycle of birth, death, and reincarnation
- **Karma**: positive or negative credit applied to reincarnation based off of person's actions
- Goal is to be reborn as a higher being to enjoy more pleasure in life
- Perfect unselfishness, mental peace, and loss of worldly desires ends samsara and lets you live in **moksha** (heaven) for eternity

Buddhism

- Siddhartha Gautama: Hindu prince/monk that tried to find true peace
- Discovered the "Middle Way"—no extremes in living
- Goal of life is to avoid samsara and achieve nirvana
- Nirvana: extinction of individual passion, hatred, and delusion—DO NOT DIE TO ACHIEVE NIRVANA
 - When one dies, he/she does not get reincarnated





