

Knowledge in Anthropology



1:2 KNOWLEDGE IN ANTHROPOLOGY

A. INTRODUCTION

Psychology and Sociology = Monocultural Approach

B. KNOWLEDGE IN ANTHROPOLOGY DIFFERS IN AT LEAST THREE WAYS

1. Anthropologists Study Human Behavior on the Basis of Data from Many Different Cultures

What is A “Human Being”?

a. Biological considerations

USA: Abortion/Euthanasia

b. Sociological considerations

Ashanti, West Africa: 8 days old = person

Papua, New Guinea: deep coma = death

2. Knowledge Sought By Anthropologists is Understood Differently

a) “Anthropology uses a comparative approach. It studies humans across time and cultures”

b) Anthropology uses a scientific process, different from that used in the “Natural Sciences”

It could not use the approach of natural sciences for at least three reasons:

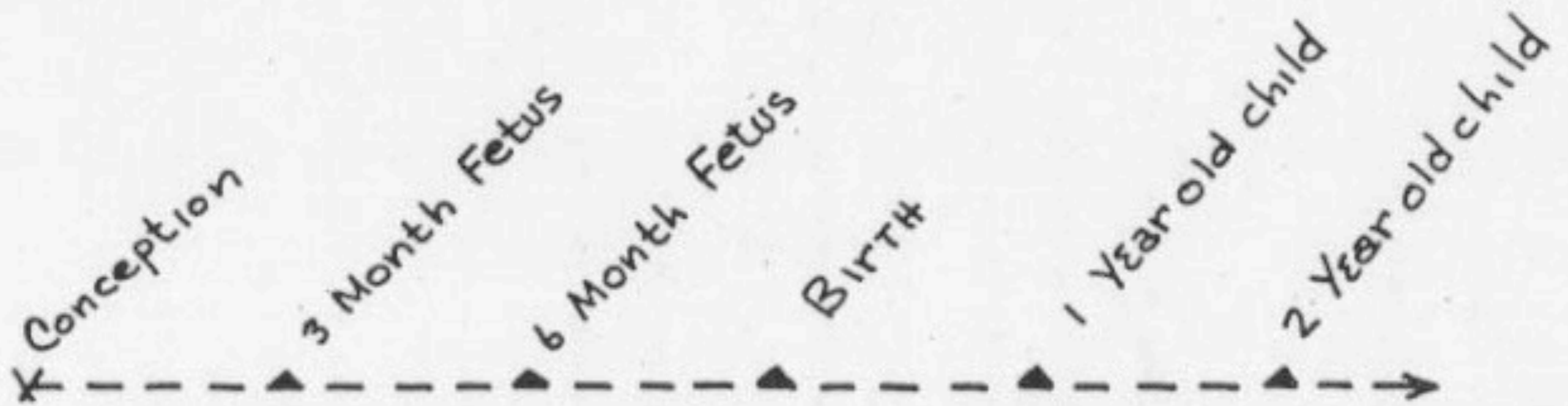
- 1) Change was not taken into consideration as a vital part of the process.**
- 2) The observer is limited by his own experiences.**
- 3) The observer is highly selective in choosing his data [Sense Experience 1.2.2]**

3. Anthropology Understands That the Observer Generalizes

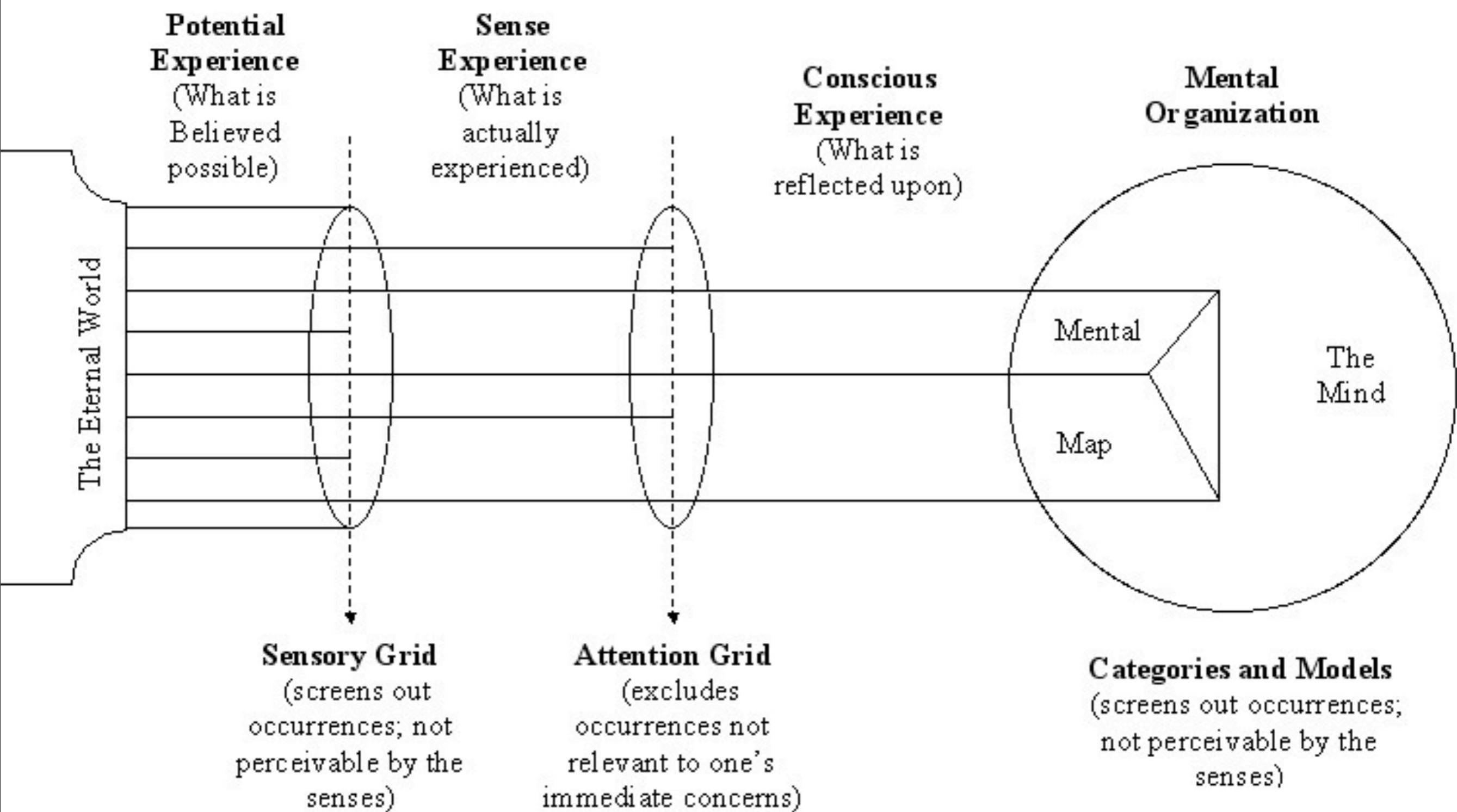
- a) Ability to Generalize: “The Capacity to reduce a great many varied experiences to a single category.”**
- b) This ability enables people to predict the future.**
- c) It also enables them to create abstract categories.**
- d) But there are potential problems.**
 - 1) Believing we have complete information, but important details lost.**
 - 2) Reaching wrong conclusions about what we see [Briefcase 1.2.3]**

NOTE: Important Principle: Different societies organize their mental categories in different ways.

- e) Human thought patterns seem to be related to three major factors.**
 - 1) Enculturation**
 - 2) Biological factors**
 - 3) Reflections of the order in nature**
 - 4) God Himself**



WHEN DO YOU BECOME A HUMAN BEING?




<u>WHAT HAPPENED</u>	<u>MR. "A" SAYS</u>		<u>MR. "B" SAYS</u>	<u>COMMENT</u>
<u>THE EVENT</u>	"I see a		"I see a	No argument
<u>THE LABEL</u> 1st Inference	"It is a man with a brief case."	MAN AND BRIEFCASE ←→	"It is a man with a brief case."	Inference because it could be a woman dressed like a man.
2nd Inference	"He is taking some work home with him."	MAN AND BRIEFCASE ←→	"Spies sometimes use briefcases."	Going off in different directions.
3rd Inference	"He must be a very dedicated man to take work home with him."	MAN AND BRIEFCASE ←→	"I wouldn't be surprised if that man doesn't turn out to be a spy."	Where's everybody going??
4th Inference	"A man that dedicated is bound to be a success in life and an asset to our community."	MAN AND BRIEFCASE ←→	"This country is infested with spies and unless we do something about it we're in trouble."	Good Grief!
ETC.	ETC.	MAN AND BRIEFCASE ←→	ETC.	!!!!

FIGURE 1:4 FROM FACT TO FALLACY IN SEVEN EASY STEPS