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Exam 2

10/22

1. The three stages in van Gennep’s theory are:

1. Separation

2. Liminality

3. Incorporation

2. Becoming a Woman in Okrika depicts an elaborate rite of passage that girls must go through to be considered a woman. During the separation stage the girls are separated from males and their bodies are painted with intricate patterns and scrutinized by older women. During this time they are also taught about womanhood, how to perform their duties, and fattened. The liminality phase consists of an elaborate ceremony and then the incorporation stage consists of the running of a race, after which they are considered women and are no longer girls. They are now prepared for childbearing. Becoming a woman in Okrika is definitely a full rite of passage and gives a unique look at the transformation of an adolescent into an adult.

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3. Rushing a fraternity is a contemporary rite of passage that affects many boys in college in the United States, especially at Case Western. During the separation stage the boys attend several fraternity sponsored events which are often “invite only”. If they receive a bid from the fraternity that they wish to join the liminality phase begins, although in this specific rite of passage the liminality stage and the separation phase overlap for a long time. During this is period, the boys must decide what fraternity to join or whether to join one at all. If they decide to join one, most fraternities have a pledge ceremony or association ceremony in which these “rushees” are part of the fraternity but are not brothers yet. They are further separated from their other peers while the fraternity brothers decide if they truly have a place in their fraternity. If they get through this liminality/separation stage they finally have an initiation ceremony. This is the incorporation stage where they become brothers and officially join the fraternity.

4. Sexuality is such a major focus in the anthropology of adolescence because the sense of sexuality develops further during puberty which is when adolescence begins. Also cross-culturally sexuality and sexual behaviors have significance to adolescent development and eventual assumption of full adult roles. Sexuality is a biological and visible difference between childhood and adolescence.

5. The biocultural approach is a more holistic approach to studying anthropology. It looks at anthropology through historical, biological, and cultural terms. The benefits of this type of analysis are that it allows the anthropologist to observe the intended group over a long period of time and that conclusions or theories made based on data collected is looked at through the context of history and biology, not just culture. For example, the research being conducted on African American girls in Shaker Heights High School is longitudinal, and questions of body image were asked to women from older generations before the research on contemporary girls began. The costs of the biocultural approach are that it takes a very long time; it is not good for research that needs to meet a deadline. Many contemporary business or government sponsored anthropological research have deadlines. Let’s say that the government of a nation wants to build a dam in a secluded area where an indigenous population lives, they would hire anthropologists to study the effects that building the dam would have on that group of people. But they would not need a biocultural approach method. The biocultural method helps us to study adolescents because adolescence is largely marked by biological changes as well as environment changes and having the more holistic view allows anthropologists to better explain specific behaviors.

6. Sambians have a large history of violence so it is very important for their boys to be prepared to become strong men and warriors. This is why the Sambians have such an elaborate initiation process. The process reflects developmental discontinuity because it occurs in stages. The idea behind this process is to instill masculinity in the boys. During these stages they must go through nose-bleedings, beatings, and must kill an enemy. The role of emotion work is to show that the initiates are able to control their emotions and feelings and channel them towards masculinity. The essence of masculinity has an incredible importance to the Sambians. This is why semen and the ability to ejaculate are so sacred to them; they represent manliness and the ability to fight in battle. Therefore ingestion of semen is a large part of initiation for the boys; the Sambians believe that to be able to ejaculate boys must first obtain the semen externally (by ingesting it). Because masculinity is highly valued, femininity is looked down upon. Therefore there is a definite separation between men and women in Sambian culture. Men understand the importance of women in childbearing and simple daily life however, contact with women can be dangerous when men are initiated and unmarried as well as when women have their period. Women are considered to be below men in this society because men are trained to be stronger and protect the community. The strong masculinity complex creates dominance over women in the society. Even during intercourse males must take precautions to avoid being “polluted” by the feminine essence.

7. The “magical age of 10” is the time when boys and girls realize their sexual attractions. Herdt explains how the Sambians believe that if they do not begin to initiate a boy before the age of 10 it is too late and the boy is “too old” or “too big”. Because sexuality holds such meaning to the Sambians (sex, semen, etc. are very sacred) they must be taken away and taught about these things before their desires fully control them. This age is so important to the anthropology of adolescence because it begins the development of sexuality. Puberty marks the point where sexuality and biology meet, but this “magical age” is the precursor to adolescence, so it is incredibly important for anthropologists studying adolescents to research the behaviors during this age.

8.

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|  | Sambia | Becoming a Woman in Okrika  | Your chosen ethnography (from course section 1) |
| List a key effect of cultural change on adolescence (or adolescent rituals) for either boys or girls. | Because globalization continues to increase the style of warfare that the Sambia engage in will decrease therefore changing the warlike status of men. This may also improve the status of women. | Globalization will also cause a decrease in tradition for the adolescents of Okrika. This cultural change will probably give more options for them and possibly change the ritual. | There is less hope for the future for adolescent Inuits in Northern Canada because of increased globalization and the climate change. This causes depression in a lot of Inuit adolescent. |

9. I understand now how traditions are passed down and how much they influence the development of adolescents. Adolescence is an interesting stage of life and for the Sambian boys there is not a lot of decision-making they have to do. Their adolescence is set-up for them and is completed in stages. Herdt’s description of the initiation really helps to understand how the initiation process works in adolescence because it is such an extreme ritual from the viewpoint of Western culture. Initiation rituals and questions of sexuality are so important to adolescence and in the Sambian society there is an incredibly rigid tradition of what happens during male initiation and the importance of sexuality. Herdt’s “magical age of 10” is also incredibly significant to the study of adolescents because it shows that the pre-adolescent time is also incredibly important to study to be able to fully understand adolescence.

10. My current research question is: What is the effect of drug culture on adolescents in the United States compared to those in Latin America? Does drug use curtail or lengthen adolescence?

Extra credit:

The course is very interesting. Professor, your lectures are incredibly engaging which is surprising because I usually cannot pay attention during lectures. The course is working for me because the material you are giving us is incredibly interesting to me.

I think more days for seminar teaching, where we participate in speaking about the topics, would help me more, but other than that I really have no complaints.