

ALLIANCE UNIVERSITY

PEOPLE AS SOCIAL AND CULTURAL BEINGS

SUBMITTED BY PRINCESS A. COOMBS

SUBMITTED TO: DR. STANLEY JOHN

DATE SUBMITTED: February 04, 2023

This is an interaction paper from the second chapter of the book *Soul, Self, And Society A Postmodern Anthropology for Mission in a Postcolonial World*.

The book was published by Cascade Books; and the publishing date is 2011 in Eugene, Oregon.

There are four specific areas that I will be focusing on in this chapter, and they are: a one sentence thesis statement, a one paragraph summary of the chapter, personal interaction with specific themes in the readings, and 2 questions for further engaging this topic. The topic of this chapter is titled, **Culture, Ethnocentrism, and Contextualization**; and the focus of this chapter is on Culture and Meaning.

THESIS STATEMENT

“Culture is constructed out of the materials, ideas, social relations, and spiritual resources at hand.”ⁱ

SUMMARY -PAGES 11-44

In this chapter, the author addresses the three aforementioned topics, and provided several definitions of each by several given writers.

CULTURE IN POSTMODERN PERSPECTIVE- PAGES 38-41

The posture that the post modern perspective holds regarding culture is that, culture is not responsible for doing “this or that.” Instead, it is the actions of human beings. The argument of this concept further shares that human beings, when placed in a particular place or time, do not act randomly, and that whatever they do, or how they act, is dependent upon what is accessible to them in their environment.ⁱⁱ

GOSPEL and CULTURE PAGES 40-41

According to the author of the text, Kenneth Cauthen shares that “Jesus was shaped by culture, and that He also ministered in culture, and if this was not so, then Jesus “would not be human.”ⁱⁱⁱ

ETHNOCENTRISM – PAGES 24-25

In regards to ethnocentrism, the text shares that human beings are usually bent on responding to the ways of other people, and prejudging them by their behavioral manifestations, by using their own behavior, and explain the differences “as if they were the result of perceived physical and mental differences (racism) or spiritual and moral differences (elitism”).^{iv}

CONTEXTUALIZATION

According to the writer, the process of contextualization is to be aware from the inception, that in order for people to take in consideration the “claims of Jesus Christ,” that the gospel must be made understandable to them.^v

PERSONAL INTERACTION

Two of the many concepts found in the second chapter of this text regarding culture, and its meaning that resonate in my mind, are: (1)the writer who states that “culture is learned and shared; that whatever appears strange to an individual, that is, if it is not by learning from others, or by sharing with others , then this not culture. It is “idiosyncratic.”^{vi} Also, (2) the writer who expounds on cultural relativism by providing an analogy to this concept. That “culture is like a pair of glasses.” That some of the prescriptions for these glasses are for nearsightedness, while some are for farsightedness, while some are merely sunglasses, while some are rose-colored glasses.....^{vii}

TWO QUESTIONS

1. Should anthropology of any kind (example cultural, or social) be taught and studied as a prerequisite for potential missionaries in seminaries whether for global or local, long-term, or short-term interest?^{viii}
2. Can an individual become so learned, and engrossed in a certain culture due to long-term residency with a particular ethnic group that, that person finds it difficult to revert back to certain aspects of the culture of their own ethnic group? For example, to the point that the individual will need to relearn certain customs of the culture that he or she grew up?^{ix}

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v	pg.41
vi	pg. 21-22
vii	pg.32-33
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