

January 22, 2013

### **Ethnography Assignment - Proposal**

- What is your site?
- What makes it a good site for ethnography?
- What do you hope to find out? Go into the site with interests, NOT a hypothesis more based on your interests, do not expect you to know what your essay is about now. At the end of it all you look at your notes and figure out what can be said about what was observed. Ex: how people relate to each other, what makes this a religious community.
- How will you do your research?
- Include Citations from websites of the religious site that you may have used as referene.

### **Wrap up -> Clifford Geertz**

- Religions constitute the worlds their adherents inhabit
- Religions provide guidelines for adherents actions within these worlds
- When a building falls on someone -> specific act of witchcraft, not because bad things happen but because a specific witch has cast a specific spell. Witchcraft is an explanation of why things happened and instructs people how they should react to something that happened and the people will despise the witch who cast the spell and they will hire a witch doctor to perform rituals to set things right again
- Geertz and symbols: white flag, number 6 and dark clouds... Something that stands in for another action ex: building falling is a symbol of witchcraft, meaning is witchcraft and action is to consult a witch doctor.
- Human beings need meaning in order to survive
- It's (meaning) a part of life that is religious instead of secular. Religion can be defined in the religious meaning of life, the most meaningful things. The sacred cannot be cut out from the social.
- Firstly, understand religious systems and their symbols and second relate this to the world. How does the sacrificial feast work? What do people do? Who participates?
- Geertz is interested in the meaning and then how the meaning relates to the social world. He took this approach from Weber

### **Max Weber – The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism**

- 1)religion and not only economy is response to social changes 2)text is still salient, concern lies with social change, historical thinker so he is not interested in finding the essence of religion or a universal definition, wants to explore religion and economic processes.
- Something non tangible as religion can impact the world.

- Religion and not only economy paved the way for modernity (modern capitalism) in a way it is owed to a spiritual resolution – protestant reformation.
- Enlightenment brought upon the idea of freedom, rationalist movement. Weber disagrees, freedom and human rights emerges from puritan America, freedom conscience and worship = puritans establish this.
- Pluralisation of Christianity -> Martin Luther, he was interested in reforming the church from within but sparked a revolution. Catholic church sold indulgences (Hoax), absolve the purchaser from sin, God should be the only one to forgive sin, salvation is a gift from the grace of God (good things you do are not what is going to save you), wanted a church without so much access and ritual.
- Pressed people to be self-conscious and religion should be separate from everyday activity.
- 30 years war – ended with the treaty of Westphalia: 1648, prince chooses religion of his own state, if it is something else they can practice as long as it does not interfere with others. Religion is circumscribed within the state, state is the arbiter of religion. Only way to keep peace.
- **John Calvin** – French theologian. Ethic of Capitalism
- **Luther** – moral duty to work in the world from the idea of the “calling” = what you do is something God asks you to do. What you’re meant to do. Only way to live acceptably to God was to work in this moral way in the world = salvation was from God (Calvin disagreed)
- **Calvin**- you are born into the world condemned or saved yet no one knows for sure if they are one or the other, everything is predetermined. This worried people and they would flock to the clergy and ask for advice on how to know whether or not they were saved. The clergy said: 1) If you doubt in your salvation it was a sign that you were damned, so you have a duty to imagine yourself as saved 2) labour was viewed as the best possible need to attain the self-assurance that you were saved, greater conviction and harder you worked the more you felt saved.
- **Weber**-Two ways to recognize salvation: 1) feeling your own godliness – dedicated to mysticism (follow Luther) 2) work harder – Ascetic action (followers of Calvin) they also have to have extreme self-discipline, took the idea of what monks do and applied it to the world, essential to the idea of Capitalism. What mattered was being moral not rich but it had a side effect Ex: monks
- Successful people are protestant, why? The success of capitalism required a particular *Ethos* of Capitalism. This Ethos or spirit included moral attitudes about work arose from the protestant reformation.
- **Capitalism**: economic and political system which a country’s trade and industry are controlled by private owners for profit, rather than by the state.
- Spirit of economic activity is a calling and contrasts business astuteness= anting to acquire wealth to become more wealthy. It is a moral duty, not just making ones way in the world, not to just accumulate wealth. Earning money in modern economic encounter is needed for your “calling”. Work as an end in itself, work marks salvation.
- Important: offers analysis of religion as a force in the world, as critically implicated in other domains of the world.

- What you are doing that causes you to be damned – it is predestined
- The Iron Cage, Disenchantment = reach of religion and effects are disconnected from what religion is. Utilitarian outlook, how religious origin has disappeared. Modern day capitalists pursuit of money is an end = they are not spiritual, they puritans wanted to labour because of God's calling, we have to do this work we need to do this for profit, it is part of economic profit now without benefit of being part of ascetic salvation =>being locked in the Iron Cage. This is what is referred to the disenchantment of the world. Do we live in this world? Has the magic of religion disappeared?

-keep in mind the theoretical background from the 3 thinker's texts we have read for the next readings.

-conference: think of 3 ways of thinking about religion are relevant to what Karen Brown is saying about Mama Lola. -> go back over Mama Lola -> Must bring all four texts to conference, medium doesn't matter -> bring questions and comments 😊 TADA!

-next Tuesday film, do colonialism reading!