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Anthropology 121

Quiz #3
Ch. 4 Ritual

1. T/F The term *ritual* can refer to any repetitive sequence of acts or events.
True – doesn't have to be religious. e.g. morning rituals
2. T/F *Religious ritual* involves the manipulation of religious symbols.
True -
3. Why do people carry out religious rituals?
Comfort, explanation, bring about change, honor seasonal changes
4. What conditions might require a situational or crisis ritual?
Unexpected event – e.g. death, sudden illness, terror attack, witch craft!
5. A periodic ritual is one that is:
 - a. performed because of the will or desire of a deity
 - b. associated with critical events in the life of an individual
 - c. celebrated on a ritual calendar
 - d. involved with an altered state of consciousness**C**
6. Examples of prescribed, periodic rituals include all of the following *except*:
 - a. Diwali
 - b. Quinceañeras
 - c. Passover
 - d. Ramadan**B – once in a lifetime☺**
7. A technological ritual is one that is involved with:
 - a. controlling an aspect of nature such as bringing rain
 - b. moving people into new social categories or statuses
 - c. curing illness and death
 - d. causing the death of an individual**A**
8. Protective rituals are often found in situations:
 - a. involving soul loss
 - b. that involve the quest for food
 - c. that are dangerous and unpredictable
 - d. that involve a person's change in status**C**
9. The Navaho "Blessing Way" is performed, in part, to reestablish harmony with the universe so that an ill person might be cured of the illness. This is an example of a(n):
 - a. technological ritual
 - b. ideological ritual
 - c. therapy ritual
 - d. revitalization ritual**C**
10. Rituals that reinforce community standards of behavior and cohesiveness are:
 - a. rites of passage
 - b. social rites of intensification
 - c. revitalization rituals
 - d. salvation rituals**B**
11. Death rituals:
 - a. restore social order
 - b. reveal secrets
 - c. create status and boundaries**A**
12. What are the three stages in rites of passage?
 1. **Separation**
 2. **Transition/liminal/marginal**
 3. **Re-incorporation**

13. The liminal stage can: (select those that apply)

a. include rebellious rites b. the experience of a community amongst equals c. include beatings and other violent behaviors d. counter the existent social order e. be avoided

A, B, C, D

14. People who share the same experiences forge strong bonds. Describe what is meant by *communitas*? How does *communitas* function to create stability in society?

Comraderie by an age-set, social unit, military unity...people who share history, trust, gone through important life transitions together.

15. Examples of rites of passage in American society would *not* include a:

a. wedding ceremony b. funeral c. high school graduation d. Easter sunrise service

D – all others happen just once in a life time.

16. What seems to be the symbolic purpose of older Melanesian men instructing younger males to ingest their semen?

Transition into adulthood by receiving life-giving properties of semen to enable the development of secondary sex characteristics

17. What is female genital infibulation? When religious benefits does it confer?

Cutting and stitching of female genitals to insure chastity. Tribal identity, pre-marital virginity that the continuance of biological patrilineage

18. What does the concept tabu refer to?

Activities, foods that are prohibited – sacrilegious, dangerous

19. T/F Many societies have prohibitions against eating particular foods. An example would be *kashrut*, the Jewish laws regarding what foods can and cannot be eaten and how they must be prepared.

T

20. What sorts of restrictions do menstrual tabus impose?

Social isolation (menstrual hut), can't cook for men, can't have sex while bleeding

Is God An Accident?

1. What did Stephen Jay Gould mean in contending that religion and science are “non-overlapping magisteria?”

**Science is the realm of facts (tested by scientific method (hypothesis, repeated tests)
Religion the realm of values**

2. T/F 96% of Americans believe in God.

T

3. T/F Atheism is more common in America than it is in Europe.

F - Europe is the exception regarding world cultures...America functions as a free religious market in which churches vie for parishioners

4. T/F Marx considered religion to be an opiate for oppressed people.
T – soothed the pain of existence
5. What did Freud consider the three-fold task for religious beliefs?
1. Exorcise the terror of nature
2. Reconcile men to the cruelty of fate
3. Compensate them for sufferings and deprivations which civilized life as imposed on them
6. T/F There are cultures in the world that do not believe in an all-wise and just God.
T – Gods can be stupid and malevolent
7. T/F Religion may have emerged not to serve a purpose, but by accident.
T—(the focus of this article!!)
8. Why have the reactions of babies been studied to assess distinctions between physical and psychological?
Babies don't yet have culture – or morality. Their responses to stimuli are innate.
9. T/F We see people as separate from their bodies.
T – Easy distinction between mind/soul and the physical body
10. T/F It is possible for a body to not have a soul.
T – e.g. Zombies; they lack free will or moral feelings
Ghosts, poltergeists and angels are souls without bodies...
11. Why does the notion of a soul without a body make sense to us?
It's impossible to imagine an end to our very existence...
12. T/F We see purpose, intention and design even when they are not there.
T We see purpose in things that are random...and generate story about how it all is in fact meaningful
13. T/F Darwin's discovery of the theory of natural selection challenged the notion of divine design.
T Adaptation to environmental shifts...this does not make intuitive sense to us. Innately we believe that design requires a creator/designer. Children prefer explanations that involve someone in charge...
14. Do you believe in an afterlife?
Very common belief...even for those with no religion at all. Very difficult to handle the idea that everything ends when our bodies expire
15. Where do supernatural ideas come from?
They are a byproduct of our mental systems...where we see a dualism between our human selves and larger powers.

The Evolution of the God Gene

1. How have excavations in the Oaxaca Valley of Mexico demonstrated an evolution of religious behaviors?

7,000 BC -- a simple dancing floor – an arena for communal religious dances by hunter-gatherers –

1500 BC – ancestor cult shrines appear after the emergence of corn-based agriculture

AD 30 – sophisticated astronomically oriented temples of an early archaic state

2. T/F Religious behavior was favored by natural selection.

T - --hallmark of evolved behavior..exists because favored by natural selection

3. T/F Rituals can resolve quarrels and patch up the social fabric.

T-

4. T/F Amongst foraging bands, religion would have functioned like an invisible government.

T – cause member to put community needs above own self-interest.

5. What is the relationship between altruism and religion?

Focus on the group rather than the individual via cooperative ritual and community benefitting behaviors. Even warfare causes groups to focus on each other as triumphant warriors

6. In what ways can religion be seen as a means of generating social cohesion?

Causing cooperation (via communal projects, warfare), ultimately it's a society and it's leaders that direct the outcome of the cohesion.

7. T/F According to the God Gene theory, humans have a genetic predisposition to spiritual belief.

T – it does involve more than one gene...

8. What is self-transcendence? Where do you think you would measure on a self-transcendence scale?

Capacity to reach beyond the self. To see everything in the world as part of one great totality.

The Adaptive Value of Religious Ritual

1. What are some of the behaviors, activities and dress people engage in in the name of religion?

Shave heads, circumcision, genital mutilation, penile subincision, cover heads, scarification, tattooing, painful initiations, wearing burkhas and other hot bulky clothes

2. Humans have engaged in ritual behavior for at least ____ years.

a. 3,000 b. 10,000 c. 50,000 d. 100,000 e. 1.5 million

D

3. T/F Scientific rationalism triumphed over religion by the late 20th century.

F – hardly!!

4. T/F It is unusual for a human culture to engage in costly rituals.

F – the focus of this article!!

5. T/F Spiritual beliefs are indicative of a primitive mind.

F

6. T/F The primary adaptive benefit of religion is to facilitate cooperation in a group.

T – important...doing all of this extra activity has enabled survival

7. What are some of the ritualistic behaviors that animals engage in?

Rattle snake- threat display

Birds – wing waving, head wagging, hopping (courtship display/ritual)

8. T/F It's rare for animals send out dishonest signals.

F – look bigger and bolder than they are

9. What does sending out a costly signal convey?

Commitment, cooperation, trust (despite handicap, incredible effort)

10. T/F Groups that engage in highly distinct dress and practices tend to have the highest rates of attendance at their prayer services.

T – e.g. Orthodox Jews, Jehovah Witnesses

11. T/F Fewer American Catholics attend mass today than 40 years ago.

T – now that participation is less demanding, attendance is down.

12. How did religious constraints enhance the economic productivity of highly religious kibbutzim?

Communal farmers in Israel...adhered to religious restrictions—fruits cannot be eaten for the first years of a tree's life. Agricultural fields must lie fallow every 7 years, the corners of fields are never to be harvested.

13. T/F Amongst kibbutzim males engage in fewer public rituals than females.

F – Males visibly pray three times a day

Women's rituals are more private – mikvah bath, baking bread, lighting Sabbath candles in the home

14. Do more difficult classes have lower attrition rates than easy classes?
(Discussion)

Prayer and Healing

1. T/F Patients who were prayed for by strangers showed a statistically significant level of recovery compared to those who were not.

F

2. What differences were found between patients who knew they were being prayed for and those who did not?

They had a higher rate of post- such operative complications such as abnormal heart rhythms, possibly the result of anxiety caused by learning that they were being prayed for.

3. T/F Women attempting to achieve pregnancy through IVF had double the success rate compared to those who were not prayed for?

F – Was a research study that lacked controls and was run by a parapsychologist..study eventually removed from the publishing journal's website

4. What are the research problems faced by in measuring spiritual experiences with scientific methodologies?

Codifying scientifically doesn't get to the core of the issue...e.g. what nature of prayer, length of prayer time, relationship between prayer giver and receiver...

5. If God is omniscient and omnipotent, should he be reminded that someone needs his assistance?

So then prayer is done ultimately for generating peace of mind for those who are doing the praying. Bodies naturally heal when well supported...the more we can gain control over our body process (breath, concentration, meditation, calming inner self...)

Secrets of Psychics

1. Are there psychics that you would trust? Why? Why not?

(Discussion)

2. What powers did James Randi discover the Russian psychics have?

None – not their water nor their ability to analyze personality via photos

3. Who was Uri Geller? What powers did he claim to have?

Israeli Psychic. Could bend metal (e.g. spoons) with his mind.

4. How does psychic surgery work?

Engaging in deep massage on the stomach followed by placing animal parts -- it's an illusion that can cause the sense that something significant is being done

5. How did Peter Popoff (faith healer) access his divine powers?

Through a wireless ear piece—his wife reading personal information from prayer cards

6. Why did the students who were given “their” astrology charts all believe they were quite accurate?

Because they sounded personal – each had their name – mentioned that their sexual adjustment had been a bit difficult.

7. What happened when the palm reader decided to tell his subjects the opposite of what he saw?

They still believed him. It's the delivery – the intention of offering personal and important information.