

Reading Questions Week 3 (Evans-Pritchard, Rosaldo, Malinowski, and Clifford)

Dear All,

In order to answer these questions in a convincing manner, please be ready to provide examples from the text. Please take notes and mark appropriate passages and paragraphs on the articles. Cite them when making your points during discussion.

Evans-Pritchard made some of the most distinct contributions to overcoming the distinction between primitive and advanced societies, and between simple and sophisticated cultures.

The other three articles discuss transformations in the anthropological methods and notion of fieldwork. Subsequently, they help us to think about the shifts that occurred in understanding culture.

Please note, that the last article (by Clifford) is the longest and more complex compared to the rest, which are shorter and simpler. Therefore, budget your time and energy accordingly.

E.E. Evans-Pritchard

The Notion of Witchcraft Explains Unfortunate Events

1. What is the role of witchcraft in Azande society?
2. What specific cases do Azande attribute to witchcraft in the chain of causality? Examples?
3. Evans-Pritchard states: "Witchcraft explains why events are harmful to man and not how they happen... A Zande perceived how they happen just as we do." Explain and elaborate what he means by this.
4. When is witchcraft irrelevant? Why? (Hint: What other principles do the Azande use to explain events and misfortunes?)

Renato Rosaldo
Border Crossings

1. What is the problem of cultural (in)visibility, according to Rosaldo? What does the problem of cultural (in)visibility imply about the understanding of the concept of culture?
2. What is Rosaldo's argument regarding dialectical connections among culture, citizenship, and power?
3. While Rosaldo was doing his fieldwork among the Ilongots in the Philippines in the 1960s and 1970s, the Ilongot society went through some dramatic social changes; technological, social, and migratory, etc. How did those events and circumstances influence his understanding of culture?
4. What are the cultures in the borderlands? How do they alter the earlier notions of culture and the ways in which anthropologists view their subjects of analysis?

Malinowski, Bronislaw
The Subject, Method, and Scope of this Inquiry

1. How does Malinowski explain the importance of living within the community and participant observation even if a researcher conducts interviews?
2. What is the writer's fieldwork setting?

James Clifford
Spatial Practices

1. What is the "field" according to Clifford? How does "field" in Clifford's argument and descriptions differ from that of Malinowski's? Elaborate. (Hint: field is not just a place, but a habitus - "a cluster of embodied dispositions and practices" p. 199).

2. What are the differences between anthropological knowledge and the knowledge produced by non-anthropologists, like travel writers?

3. Can a fieldwork also be homework? Why?

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