

Notes on Anderson (1989)-Chap.2, "Function"

Emergence of Functionalism in Anthropology

-Turn of Century, French sociologist Emile Durkheim (society worships itself, art, rites used to achieve stability & maintenance, **not** reconstruct "conjectural history" of 19th cen. uni-lineal evolutionists)

+WWI, Bronislaw Malinowski (brings the sociological perspective into anthropology)

-All institutions function to achieve homeostasis, all inter-relate (holism)

-Critique 1, many institutions are "multifunctional", like art (not a 1:1 relationship between practice & function)

-Critique 2, not all functions are obvious

(overt/covert=manifest/latent)

-Critique 3, narrow utilitarian definition of "function", difficult to prove that art fulfills any function at all!

-Critique 4 (Roe), emphasizes **synchrony, the ethnographic present=** banishes change; there is **disfunction** as well as function

Economic Functionality-Roy Rappaport & Tsembaga Maring of eastern New Guinea highlands & the "unstability" of a 2-element **salt/stone axes** trading network, stabilized by more elements like artistic materials

-Mary Helms, "long-distance prestige trade", most items are not technical but aesthetic, small, rare (not modern commodity trade); it enhances one's **internal** status by getting resources from an **external source**, e.g., shell valuables

Cultural Homeostasis=(1.) similar structures emerge through interaction in society, (2.) any differences tend to be **complementary**, not **antagonistic**

Our own modern art picture of the artist as a bohemian & rebel is both recent & ethnocentric, most traditional artists support the status quo.

Art & Social Control=George Harley & Mano & Gao tribes of Liberia, **Poro** secret society (a **voluntary association**) & Sande among the women. Authority vested in elders who climb the system & assist chiefs. 3 levels, the uppermost has masks impersonating dead high-ranking men, then the masks came to be worshipped as ancestor relics

-masks, with their supernatural power, came to be instruments of justice, judges are masked & speak in falsetto; may pronounce without fear of retribution, matter goes first to elders then to mask, but only for ratification- the masks are handed down 4 generations or more="spirits"

Halloween Masks played same function in European society-"trick" or treat, masked visitors reek havoc on the possessions of the stingy, malicious & anti-social

Alvin Wolfe & "Sodalities"-art as a communication mechanism between groups of men= "social cleavages" leads to an abundance of art

Adaman islanders are the example of minimal cleavages, minimal art (largely body art="assertive style")

Sculpture (e.g., Masks)

- 1.) Altered Identity
- 2.) Social-Control
- 3.) Sodalities

e.g., Poro/Sande (Liberia & Sierra Leone)

- a.) a "secret society" (a "voluntary association")
- b.) impersonation=masks are the spirit or "portrait" of specific ancestor (corporate descent groups)