

Anthropology and You: Final Paper

I enjoyed looking deep into my sense of self for this final project. One thing that was difficult for me was trying to shift the perspective that I was comfortable and familiar with. I wanted to analyze the transformations I've made in various areas from birth to my childhood. In my project, you will see that I covered all the basics about myself, but what surprised me about this information is my unique sense of transformation; a big part of that is from my environment and personal worldview. Through an introspective ethnographic exploration of my journey, this paper delves into the profound transformations and transitions that have shaped my identity, highlighting the dynamic interplay between my environment, cultural background, and evolving worldview, ultimately revealing the complexities of my self-discovery and growth.

I wanted to first touch on how my environment affected my upbringing. I was born and raised for the majority of my life in Northeastern Colorado. A small town known as Sterling had the only Walmart within a 40-mile radius. After a year or so of my birth, my father was stationed back at Camp Humphreys in South Korea, so my family packed up for their second time there. My time in Korea was short, but I do have fond memories of how different things operated compared to when we got back home like the endless curiosity of strangers because of my blonde hair and blue eyes, or the unfamiliar smells of the fish markets. What I first noticed at a young age compared to most is geography when in Korea we could see so many places from China, Guam, Sipan, and Thailand. All within relative proximity, whereas the United States is a huge continent, and though has smaller cultural communities depending on what influences are around, it's all very

much based on Westernized American culture. Being able to differentiate between these vastly different cultural worldviews is something that many people from my hometown will never experience, nor is it a curiosity that they have.

I wanted to explain how the start of my schooling felt like a disadvantage, mostly because of the environment I was raised in, not just with religious parents, but within a tight traditional community that didn't take kindly to new ideas. "Shared forms of narration, discursive patterning, and reflexive forms of talk can be a powerful means of instantiating and maintaining a narrated community amid separation and fragmentation." (Falconi, 2023) I liked her article for my project because I feel this helped me understand the smaller individual communities that can branch off and create smaller more niche communities, and how their language can disclude certain groups depending on many different factors. I wanted to explore more about how I became me and deconstruct why there is this need for social hierarchy. The ideologies that surrounded me were extremely Westernized, which makes sense because to have power or control over one group or community you will need to have a set social order that the majority of people adhere to. These I would categorize as social standards, we all learn them while growing up and interacting with the world, as for the social standards that I was raised around. I felt I was already breaking this mold through my spark for exploration and interacting with different cultures at a young age.

I continued to travel the world with my mother in school, and that was met with an interesting conflict of people who responded with a sense of resentment. Either a bitter jealousy or people's lack of curiosity about the world. This kind of travel has directly

shaped the person I am today, I am more open-minded to new ideas or philosophies. I also have the drive to gain a deeper and more personal relationship with those around me, and what their roots look like.

In my hometown, as I mentioned, society is very much stuck in these old ideological ways. An article from this course helped me understand why there was this push for a hierarchy, and how colonists kept these groups in lower classes. Briggs suggests in his article that early colonists physicians had preconceived notions of certain groups, and how the lack of communication between groups further pushed POC or even women, disabled, or simply the working class as inferior. I thought it was interesting how some will disagree that language has much to do with how we have evolved as a society, language directly affects how we interact with the world around us. (Briggs, 2023) This article sheds light on how all of these negative effects like racism, ableism, or white supremacy directly lie in colonialism, and to truly reverse this Briggs suggests a “new beginning.” This new beginning I believe is the ‘woke’ movement, where people are intentional about the language they use and who they are interacting with. An ideology that is heavily rejected in my area.

Being at the University of Colorado Colorado Springs has opened up my worldview and knowledge to terms and definitions like how we live in a ‘non-weird’ society, but to others in the world we ARE a weird society, it’s all about the environment and what values you have. UCCS allowed me resources for books, articles, and reviews from scholarly sources that can help me better understand how specifically the United States has formed and retained these kinds of values and ideologies.

The last article that helped me with my final project and that I resonated with the most was Leslie Silko's *Language and Literature from a Pueblo-Indian Perspective*. Not only am I fascinated with the traditions and how connected indigenous peoples were to nature and family, but she mentioned a quote that I want to take away from this course, "Words with the most meaning are spoken from the heart." (Silko, 2023) I wanted to point out how in Silko's article they discussed a tendency to 'hide' or 'run' from oneself and traumatic behaviors because the language can make others uncomfortable or it's hard to put into an explanation, so that kind of nonverbal communication and family is so important. I could identify with that because I tended to be a people pleaser to ensure that everyone around me was comfortable. I am glad that being in college has taught me to put myself and my beliefs first.

I had very transformative views as well as transformative moments in my life. I had grown up in an environment with very strict ideologies, religion, and thoughts that over time I had deconstructed and created my interpretation from different anthropological frameworks that I have learned over my four years at UCCS. I feel very lucky to have had the upbringing that I have had.

Works Cited

Briggs, Charles L. "Incommunicable: Decolonizing Perspectives on Language and Health." *American Anthropologist*, vol. 126, no. 1, 2024, pp. 83-95.

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Silko, Leslie M. *Language and Literature from a Pueblo Indian Perspective*. vol. 208, 2006.