I. Fads

A. Collective behavior directed towards acquiring, participating, or using the latest thing.

B. Characteristics

1. short term (volatile)

2. influence: indirect (media) and direct (group)

3. millions involved

4. unconventional

5. non-utilitarian

6. trivial area of life

7. no significant commitment

8. no significant consequences

C. Examples

1. products: coonskin caps, hoola hoops, pet rocks, slinky, Cabbage Patch

dolls, Beanie Babies, Pokemon cards, Furby

2. activities: bungee jumping, Macarena, streaking, dungeons and

dragons, swallowing goldfish, stuffing people in telephone booth

3. words and phrases: “dig it” “cool” “dude” “not” “my bad”

4. fashion: Nehru jackets, platform shoes (men), bell bottoms, leisure suits, miniskirts

5. internet fads: Jay Maynard “Tron Guy,” Mahir Gagri “Kiss You”

6. Short term

a. cabbage patch dolls 1984-85 $1.2 billion by 1986 decline

b. streaking: Jan-May 1974

D. Why study? (If trivial)

1. General processes at work in society

a. identity construction

i. traditional communities (gemeinschaft)

ii. mass society (gesellschaft)

b. socialization

i. peer pressure

ii. in group

2. Mass media and collective behavior

a. classical theory and PR: Edward Bernays

b. marketing and advertising

i. “The art of making people want things.”

ii. Targeting children

c. Example: McDonald’s and Beanie Babies

i. avg week 10 million Happy Meals

ii. 10 days April 1997 100 million (Teen Beanie Babies)

iii. 4 meals for every one three to nine year old

I. Crazes

A. Definition: collective behavior that involves intense participation in an unconventional activity

1. long term

2. significant commitment (“your life” or “most important part”)

3. influence: indirect and direct (group)

4. lasting impact

5. utilitarian

6. areas: economic, religious, health, and recreational

7. can become institutionalized

B. Examples:

1. recreational: tennis craze, running craze, triathlon craze

2. health: diets

3. economic: stock market (.com), pyramid schemes (Ponzi)

4. religious: revivals

5. Ghost Dance (1888-1890)

a. context

i. reservations

ii. starvation

iii. destruction of culture

iv. assassinations

b. prophet/messiah: Wovoka (Pauite)

c. prophecy

d. Ghost dance: ritual

e. Ghost dance shirts

f. spread rapidly

g. repression: Wounded Knee

C. Witch Craze (1400s to 1700s)

1. Witches: “Satans servants” everywhere

2. Craze: fear, hunt, torture, trial, execution.

3. area: mainly Germany, Switzerland, and France

4. consequences

a. 200,00 to 500,00

b. mostly women

5. social context

a. superstitious culture

i. belief: witches, demons, gargolyes

ii. belief: witches could be good or bad

b. natural world: Devil

c. declining church power

d. patriarchal

6. Church

a. witches all bad

b. book: The Witches Hammer (1486)

i. witches exist

ii. becoming a witch

iii. trials and executions

7. Institutionalization

a. Demonology

i. sexual orgies

ii. mock Christianity,

iii. eat children’s flesh

iv. sexual seduction

b. Inquisitions

i.witch hunters

ii. torturers

iii. trials

iiv. executions

8. Consequences

a. 200,000 to 500,000 burned, drowned, beheaded, strangled or

hanged

b. whole villages burned

c. “thousands and thousands of stakes”

d. burn the host to kill the witch

9. targets

a. 85% to 90% women

b. beginning: old single

c. end: young married

10. Why women?

a. feminine characteristics

b. sexual appetite

c. patriarchy

i. strong women

ii. women who violate conventional norms

11. Power, Fear, and Collective Behavior

a. Catholic Church

i. losing power: Renaissance, Reformation, Enlightenment

ii. fear

iii. target powerless and vulnerable

iv. maintain status quo

b. Suggestible

i. social change

ii. Great Transformation