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Part 2: Communicating Culture: Language and Expressive Culture

2.1 The Egg and the Sperm: How Science Has Constructed a Romance Based on Stereotypical Male-Female Roles

1. In traditional stories of the process of fertilization, sperm are depicted as:
    a. Collaborators, with eggs, in the process of fertilization.
    b. Active cells with a mission of fertilization.*
    c. Wasteful because of their overproduction.
    d. Romantic partners to the egg, engaged in a complex courtship dance.
2. Based on the numbers produced, egg cells are:
    a. Extremely wasteful compared to sperm.
    b. Often portrayed as efficient and active.
    c. Less wasteful than sperm.*
    d. Designed for passive waiting.
3. Sperm are able to enter the egg because of:
    a. The massive forces generated by their flagella.
    b. Strong cellular lurches forward.
    c. Mutual interactions on the parts of both egg and sperm.*
    d. A strong will to persevere.
4. Martin's analysis shows that:
    a. Sperm lack a personality, though eggs are nurturing and protective.
    b. Eggs are largely passive, while most sperm are active and energetic.

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c. Both eggs and sperm have traits that parallel the natural personal traits of women and men.

d. Eggs and sperm do not have gendered personality traits, but rather a complex set of biological interactions.*

5. When Martin argues that a feminist analysis of metaphors in scientific descriptions will rob them of their power to naturalize our social conventions about gender, she:

a. Is pointing out that social conventions about gender do not have a biological basis.*

b. Is arguing that gender is natural.

c. Is showing that sperm and eggs do not follow biological gender roles.

d. Is saying that all scientific descriptions are only metaphors.

2.2 What Are You Laughing At? Assessing the "Racial" in U.S. Public Discourse

1. Comedian Paul Mooney commented that, in Michael Richards' racial comments Richards crossed two lines. Those were:

a. One line regarding contextual use of racial language, another regarding his personal anger.

b. One line regarding white use of racially coded words, another regarding historical use of those words.

c. One line defining social conventions for language, another defining what is funny.*

d. One line defining the place of race in comedy, another defining the right of comedians to select material.

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2. Regarding attempts to ban the word *nigger*, Christopher Hitchens described the situation as a taboo. Making an object taboo may have unintended consequences including:
    a. Only allowing certain groups to use the object.
    b. Restricting use of terms to specific contexts.
    c. Decreasing the use of the prohibited object.
    d. Making the prohibited object more pervasive and powerful.*
3. Both Richards and Imus, in their defenses, employed what strategy?
    a. Claiming that they had been misquoted.
    b. Attempting to distance themselves as people from themselves as characters on stage.*
    c. Claiming that the incident was a one-time occurrence.
    d. Attempting to justify their speech as the result of uncontrolled anger.
4. Hartigan suggests that Imus' firing was in part the result of:
    a. Shifting conventions that define what counts as racial.*
    b. Decreased presence of black men and women within media companies.
    c. Inappropriate language use in hip hop music.
    d. Ineffective denials by Imus and his producers.
5. Hartigan argues that, to change America's racial thinking, it will be necessary to:
    a. Emphasize culture in most types of advertising.
    b. Reflect on demographic changes within corporate America.
    c. Reconsider conventions that categorize individuals and groups.*
    d. Overcome many people's sense of not belonging.

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2.3 Speaking like a Model Minority: "FOB" Styles, Gender, and Racial Meanings among Desi Teens in Silicon Valley

1. The stereotype of Asian Americans as a "model minority":
    a. Obscures issues of racism and class inequality in schools.*
    b. Makes it more difficult for FOBby teens to compete in schools.
    c. Encourages the development of a diverse set of Asian subcultures.
    d. Provides opportunities for new immigrants to integrate into Asian American communities.
2. During a conversation, FOB boys may:
    a. Use Spanish as a way to mock faculty, who often mistake them for Latino.*
    b. Avoid the use of Spanish, since they are often mistaken for Latino in school.
    c. Use words in Spanish to ridicule Latino youth.
    d. Use hip hop elements to express political alignment with black people.
3. FOB girls and boys relate to language spaces differently. Specifically:
    a. Girls find private spaces where they can speak freely, while boys speak freely everywhere.
    b. Girls draw more stylistic elements from Bollywood, while boys rely more on Punjabi terms.
    c. Boys treat their own places as free spaces where they can speak as they like, while girls rarely consider school social time to be in a private space.*
    d. Girls engage in more joking behavior, while boys must be concerned with their reputations.
4. For FOB boys, the language of choice for talking about fighting is:

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a. Spanish.

b. Hip hop lyrics

c. English

d. Punjabi*

5. The use of FOB styles in language conflicts with:

a. Use of Spanish and hip hop terms by other minority groups.

b. Monolithic English used by popular Desi teens to join white America.*

c. Traditional meanings of many Punjabi words.

d. Monolithic English, in that FOB language use is gendered and English is not.

2.4 Anything can happen on YouTube (or can it?): Endangered Language and New media

1. In terms of language ideology, Bergamasco is often associated with:

a. Agriculture and food culture.

b. Intellectual elites and celebrities.

c. The past and a lack of sophistication.*

d. Nostalgia and simpler times.

2. Why might endangered languages benefit from new technology and media?

a. Technology can preserve language while increasing access and facilitating use.*

b. New media may transform language ideology so that endangered languages become less prestigious.

c. Technology and media can reduce the usage of dominant languages.

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d. New media can make endangered languages easier to pronounce and understand.

3. Cavanaugh finds that YouTube videos in Bergamasco often:
    a. Work to undermine negative stereotypes of Bergamasco.
    b. Value only pure Bergamasco.
    c. Reflect dominant language ideologies and stereotypes.*
    d. Refrain from using archaic words.
4. According to Cavenaugh, YouTube comments on Bergamasco videos may:
    a. Reinforce "*campesinismo*," or the idea that peasant farmers require political unity.
    b. Reinforce "*campanilismo*," or the idea that people from the same place have similar attitudes.*
    c. Complain about traditional usage of Bergamasco language.
    d. Discourage the use of Bergamasco in everyday situations.
5. Cavanaugh's hope is that encountering day-to-day Bergamasco in online spaces may:
    a. Help younger Bergamascos to feel that their language is both authentic and valuable.*
    b. Reinforce public criticism of sounding like a Bergamasco.
    c. Increase general knowledge of Italy's many dialects.
    d. Lead online activists to deconstruct language ideologies.

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2.5 Anthropology in Practice: Dr. Bernard Perley

1. How does Dr. Perley see his work as a type of engaged anthropology?
    a. The Maliseet prayer installation is open to anyone with interest.
    b. He used ethnographic and linguistic tools in the development of the prayer installation.
    c. He makes a deliberate effort to communicate the idea of language as an important cultural resource.*
    d. He uses a multimedia approach that combines storytelling with visual anthropology.
2. What does Dr. Perley suggest as advice for students interested in linguistic anthropology?
    a. Look for allies from unexpected perspectives.
    b. Read and stay curious about everything.
    c. Look for opportunities to expand your audience wherever possible.
    d. Find a mentor who can guide you.*

Essay Questions for Part 2

1. Language is a key theme in this section. Describe two points from the text that highlight the importance of language as a form of culture. Then describe a situation from your own life that parallels the examples given in the text.

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2. Cavenaugh's article on Endangered Language and New Media talks about disappearing language. Using two of the other cases in this section, discuss what might be the result if language usage changed drastically. What might the role of an anthropologist be in these cases?

3. Based on this section, would you say that language more often drives culture, or that culture more often drives language? Use evidence from the text to support your position.

4. Is there a difference between written and spoken language in terms of culture? State a position, then use evidence from the text to support your argument.

5. Martin's article focuses on scientific language and metaphors in relation to reproduction. Apply this same approach to another field: climate change, genetic engineering, or nutrition. What metaphors are commonly used? How do these metaphors influence knowledge, debates, and action?

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