I. RITE OF PASSAGE

rite of passage = enactment of movement from one social status or position to another.

Has three stages: 1) separation from old roles or position 2) liminal stage, betwixt and between, neither here nor there. Characterized by ambiguity, danger, chaos. Generation of communitas among peers: "we are now alike in some way and different than others." 3) reaggregation and integration into new social roles and positions.

Toraja rite of supercision:

stage 1: boys voluntarily separate themselves from younger boys; want to become "men" and be able to court women

stage 2: boys gather together to be supercised in a group. The liminal period is short, but effective in bonding boys together. They hold one another as an older man cuts them, and they dress their wounds together. They are now like one another and different than the younger boys who have not been supercised.

stage 3: boys return to the village visibly limping, demonstrating to others that they are now men. Can no longer sleep near girls/women in the family.

Meanings: reinforcement and expression of masculinity. Boys forced to overcome fear and shame regarding emerging independence and sexuality. Presented as a task that is well within the capabilities of most boys. Involves personal choice (rather than coercion), passive endurance (rather than active mastery), and the aid and support of peers. Enables boys to demonstrate their masculinity to themselves and to others. Boys have become men.
cultural schema: a cognitive and emotional representation of experience

schema guiding middle class American education: task performance. A pattern in which people are asked to perform tasks calculated to be within their capabilities. All people should be able to accomplish these tasks. People are rewarded with "success" if they accomplish the task and punished with "failure" if they do not, as mediated by people of emotional significance.

psychological consequences: life is perceived as a set of problems to be solved; any normal person should be able to do anything (anyone can become President); development of a rather narrow, pragmatic view of life and the world (don't theorize, don't speculate, don't philosophize); driven to achieve "success," no matter how trivial. Success becomes an end in itself (learning for its own sake tends not to be valued or appreciated); self esteem tied to "success," so that lack of success in an endeavor = failure = loss of self esteem.
SHORT ANSWER

Trobiand Cricket: film illustrating the process whereby cultural behavior (the game of Cricket) is transformed when integrated into Trobriand society.

symbol: a sign used in human communication; relation between the symbol and the meaning symbolized is arbitrary.

worldview: encompassing view of reality created by members of a society.

unilineal cultural evolution: the theory that all societies develop from simpler to more complex societies through similar stages of development.

moral cultural relativism: behavior varies from culture to culture and we have no way of measuring which is better or worse.

ethnocentrism: the assumption that other people’s behaviors and culture are inferior to one’s own; the use of one’s own culture as the measuring stick by which others’ are evaluated.

ethnography: a scholarly description or analysis of another way of life.

Derek Freeman: critic of Margaret Mead’s work in Samoa. Claims Mead mischaracterized the Samoans as peaceful, loving and laidback. As a result of human biology, Samoan adolescents are like all other adolescents in the world.

ritual: a repetitive social practice composed of a set of symbolic activities set off from social routine of everyday life and adhering to a culturally determined schema.

religion: a system of symbols which acts to establish moods and motivations in people by formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and clothing these conceptions with such factuality that they seem uniquely realistic.
Mead is known as a cultural determinist because she believes that the cultural context can shape human behavior in significant ways. She showed how culture shapes adolescent behavior in Samoa, the stages of cognitive development in Manus (New Guinea), and gender in New Guinea.

Samoan adolescence: casual attitude regarding sex; little jealousy (one can always find a new partner), lack of deep feeling; "facts" of life, about sex, death, birth, etc. are learned at an early age and not hedged about in secrecy; no pressure to develop quickly; diffused authority so no easy target for hostility and anger, and authority can be escaped through musu; continuity between child and adult roles

American adolescence: full of turmoil; idealism flowers; rebellion against authority; confusion and conflicts over sexual feelings; philosophical perplexities; identity confusion because of too many role opportunities

Samoan adolescence is more casual, less anxiety ridden than in US, but youth cannot develop full creativity and feeling. Life is too confined and homogenous; one size must fit all.

Adolescents in US have freedom to develop individuality and creativity, but at the cost of anxiety, turmoil, estrangement from family.