

GEN152: Affect: Understanding Emotions

Session 6- working sheet

Short summary of the Abu- Lughod text (1

The text is presenting an anthropological research that was focused on the concept of love in the Bedouin Society, a community that lives in Egypt's desert (and other places in the Mediterranean Sea area) and is based on agriculture, tribal and traditional way of life. In the text the anthropologist Abu- Lughod is presenting her perspective as an outsider that lived for two years in a Bedouin community (The "Awlad- Ali" tribe) and then came back to visit them a few years later, observing the changes that occurred as well as the influence of modernity during those years. Abu- Lughod uses Bedouin love songs as a way to understand the concept of love and other emotions in this special society. Her main conclusion from the poems is that the family is the most important concept in this society, and that kin relations are far more strong and basic than marital relations. As a result, a sexual relation can be seen as a threat to the blood relation and to the authority of the father towards his daughter, and that is why only a family member can decide which person shall the daughter marry (preferably a cousin). Even so, this does not mean that love is not relevant in the Bedouin society and that all marriages are a result of convenience. Abu- Lughod discovers through the poems a variety of emotions, a lot of them expressed by women, but also another phenomenon. In the last several years, due to changes in the economical and cultural situation, Bedouin women are more dependent in their husbands in order to survive financially, and are demanded to be more modest and restrained as a way of preserving the Bedouin structure and values in spite of the great changes (moving to houses, cars etc.) . In conclusion, Abu- Lughod is presenting a cultural perspective of emotions, in which emotions can only be truly understood in a larger context

Dixon: Dixon, as well as Abu- Lughod is interested in understating the narratives (2 that relates to emotions in the human society, they both agree that emotions are not universal or purely biological. Although the concept is very similar, Dixon's research is very different from Abu- Lughod's. Dixon's methodology is to observe books from different periods, and through noticing the terms and concepts to understand the historical and philosophical changes in the perception of emotions. Also, Dixon is researching the western- European society, which is the opposite of Abu- Lughod's point of interest

Seligman: Seligman in presenting a much more universal approach to emotions, in comparison to Abu- Lughod's text. His research aims to understand happiness and other positive emotions, and then his goal is to implement those insights in everybody's daily routine of life. Seligman is not interested in the different concept of emotions in various cultures and societies; on the contrary, he wants to make the world a happier place

Ahmed: Ahmed's approach to emotions is very radical. She claims that happiness is a political concept that was designed in order to make us participate in a huge "happiness industry", in order to be able to measure the success of countries and more. According to her, happiness does not really exist and cannot be measured in a

scientific way. Ahmed's believes that without cultures and societies emotions would .be nothing

Evans explains in his text the cultural theory of emotions. Emotions are learned behaviours and transmitted culturally. So we have different emotions in function of our cultures, as A bu-Lughod said. But he emphasizes also that there are some basic .emotions who are innate and universal as Ekman said

Solomon agrees with the perception of Abu-Lughod. As Abu-Lughod, Solomon think that emotions is a cultural acquisition, more than by the function of biology. They .think that emotions must be placed in their contexts

Rosaldo speaks about guilt and shame in his text. We don't have the same meaning of .guilt and shame. Everything depends on the culture