

Current Research in Childhood Development

Lecture 9

I. **RECOGNIZES** both biological AND cultural influences in child development.

- Diff - Biological differences and environmental factors (culture) are viewed as interacting in complex and continuous processes. Ex - Chase

2. **RECOGNIZES** the agency of the individuals:

- Individuals use culture creatively and actively
- performance
- *EX.* Bettie, Chase

3. INCORPORATES diversity:

- Includes class, race, ethnicity (diff), sexual orientation and socio-economics in the dialogue of development.
- Coexistence and interaction of 2 or more differences. i.e. ethnicity AND class AND gender - Chase, Bettie

4. Adds REFLEXIVITY:

- Awareness of biases and limitations
- End product not a narrative but a dialogue in which the observed have a chance to comment.
- *i.e. Chase, Preschool in Three Cultures, Perfectly Prep*

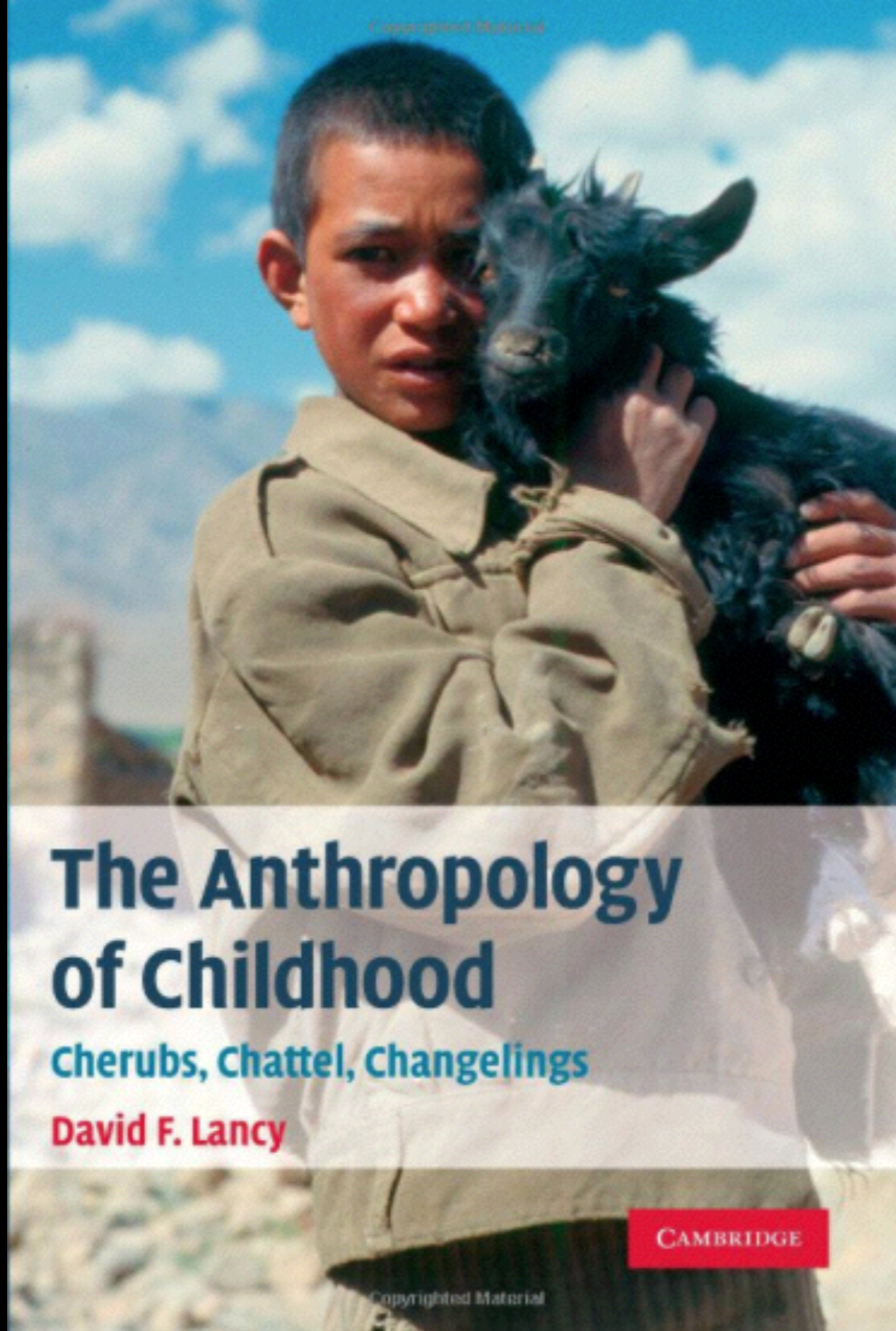
THE CULTURAL NATURE OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

2003



BARBARA ROGOFF

2008



The Anthropology of Childhood

Cherubs, Chattel, Changelings

David F. Lancy

CAMBRIDGE

- Childhood as much a cultural phenomena as a biological one
- Euroamerican values = basis of our scientific and pragmatic understanding of the nature of children
- Anthropological research provides alternatives to what is “normal”

Myth #1

The nuclear family is the “norm”

- men & women have different reproductive strategies
- both stray (Maasai)
- Polygyny – from 85% to 93% of societies
- Polygyny can be beneficial

Myth #2

Small families and limited fertility are the universal ideal

- Infant mortality
- Adults are rewarded for having lots of offspring when:
- Child-centered vs. Child-supported society
- Cultures that want lots of children EXP:
- U.S. teen pregnancies dropped 1/3 in last decade

Myth # 3

A child's wellbeing is paramount over all others

- Parent < Child less common worldwide than Parent > Child
- contribute to the welfare of the family
- abortion and infanticide are wide spread
EX:

Myth # 4

children should be protected from the world of adults
and exploitative labor

- In NO area do Euroamerican views on childhood differ from the rest of the world more than on the issue of work.
- We keep our children out of the workforce fearing their loss of innocence and studiousness – the norm elsewhere is to view it as the pathway to adulthood.

Myth # 5

Culture only reason for the differences in how children are viewed and treated cross-culturally.

- soci-economics or a culture's relative wealth affects child development

H & Gs = Children in Paradise:

- always feel wanted
- no preference for boys
- suckled on demand
- indulged by all
- no restraints
- carried when desire

- rarely or never punished or scolded
- not contribute
- play till late teens
- adolescence relatively free

*Women without Class: Girls race
and Identity*, by Julie Bettie
(2003)

- Class and race can be performed through class and race-specific styles of speech, accents, mannerisms, and dress.

- Class and race can be *performed*
- ie. white middle-class background - performed chola style
- Filipina-American “became Mexican”
- acting “white” = preppy

Concludes:

- Conscious decisions about class and racial identities = malleability and that can be performed

*Adolescent Boys: Exploring
Diverse Cultures of Boyhood.* Ed.
Niobe Way & Judy Chu (2004)

- GOALS: Understand how boys respond, experience, perceive, resist, and influence differing cultures and how contexts are critical to understanding their development.
- add experiences of boys of diverse backgrounds

- Bravado = cool masculinity, “callous sex attitudes toward women, violence as manly, and danger as exciting.”

PERFECTLY PREP

Gender Extremes at a New England Prep School



CHILD DEVELOPMENT IN CULTURAL CONTEXT

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Perfectly Prep by Sarah Chase (2008)

- Argues for the more active role of the individual (agency).
- Adds gender, class, culture, and ethnic power differences to the model of child development.
- Recognizes biological differences that could affect behavior.

How do the students use culture actively?

- agency (individuals use culture actively and creatively)
- argue for more similarities than differences but that students “perform” extremes of self & other in order to “fit in.”
- extreme performance= more relationships

Reading:

- Shostak, Chapters 4 & 5