Hindu Life Cycle Essay, Research Paper

The Hindu Life Cycle applied to a Friend

I choose the four stages of the Hindu life cycle, Caturashrama, to apply to my paper because it closely relates to the life story of my interviewee. Mr. Daniel Garcia came to the United States from Cuba in 1965 at age 26. His migration to the United States cut his educational goal short when he was trying to complete the 1st stage of the life cycle, the student stage. The most difficult period of my life was when I had to leave everything I knew and loved (Parents) to come to a foreign land to start all over again, explained Garcia. I felt cheated and helpless. I thought that I would only be in the United States for a short time until things went back to normal in Cuba but I was wrong .

I asked Mr. Garcia to tell me what values have changed over the decades. He told me that basically his values have remained the same; I am a staunch anti-communist and an advocate of human rights. I have never deviated from those values since I left my homeland . When he gave me this answer I thought to myself that he is not living for the future but remains dwelling on the past. I asked him if he had different phases in his life that caused him to feel like a different person? He told me that when he married and had his first child, it caused a sudden and profound change in his life. He told me that for a moment in time, he no longer dwelled on the past but devoted his life to his son and wife. By doing this he succeeded in his career as a carpenter by doubling his efforts to order to achieve a good standard of living for his family. This is the 2nd stage of the life cycle because the householder stage begins with marriage and also encompasses success (Artha). I was impressed by the fact that he was not interested in success leading up to the 2nd stage until he had his family. Mr. Garcia told me that that he felt proud to have been a part of his son s life and see him succeed in college. He told me that he has two grandchildren that remind him of his son when he was a small boy. I want to see all of my children succeed and not have to go through what I did when I was young , a reference to the 1st stage of the Hindu life cycle.

Mr. Garcia currently lives with his wife and moved to Victorville, California after he retired. He told me that he wanted to live in an area that was clean and peaceful away from the city. He explained to me

that city life is hard and that there were too many people in the city that do not appreciate what they have. He feels that moving out to an area that life is slower paced does good for him and his wife s health. I knew at this point that he was talking about the 3rd stage of the Hindu life cycle.

I asked Mr. Garcia if he was religious. He replied that in recent years he had become more of a devout Roman Catholic than he use to be. He explained that he attends mass each Sunday and regularly helps out in food drives and fund raising events at the local church. He also told me that he intended to complete the seven sacraments, a Catholic ritual that mimics other versions of the life cycle, and that the only sacrament that he probably will not complete was the Sacrament of Holy Orders (A calling from God to do religious work) because he is married. I asked him about dying and what he thought about it. He replied that he was not afraid of death and that he did not dwell on the subject very much. He told me that before his death arrives, he would like to travel back to a free Cuba. He implied that his life was meaningful because he had raised two children that have succeeded in their careers as well as in their own unique lives.

After we had concluded the interview, I reflected back on everything that Mr. Garcia had told me. I came to the conclusion that he was still missing something in his life that he did not want to talk about. Specifically, his life when he was a young adult in Cuba. Perhaps the memory of such events that unfolded during that stage in his life is too painful to overcome and has affected his view of the world thereafter. Perhaps Erickson s theory of the life cycle is correct when he mentioned that if there is a stage that is either skipped or incomplete, one needs to go back to that stage and resolve any issue that has affected the person s life. Perhaps that is what I believe Mr. Garcia is trying to do. He referred to going back to Cuba a free Cuba which probably meant that if Cuba were not free, he would not go back. Therefore, the question of how the mysterious issue that has affected his entire life will be resolved is a problem that only Mr. Garcia can resolve. I also felt that the last stage of the Hindu life cycle would come to Mr. Garcia very soon since I already knew that he was suffering from heart disease and that the only close relationship he has is his wife. Mr. Garcia s sons live far away and he only gets to see his grandchildren twice a year. A lonely pair of souls if you ask me. In many ways Mr. Garcia is already living the last stage of the life cycle because he has very few attachments to other people and is living in a somewhat remote area of California. I would not call him a total renunciant but he is quickly approaching that stage. Perhaps going back to his homeland will complete the fourth stage.

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