

Individual Autonomy and Social Structure Essay

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Individual Autonomy and Social Structure: Dorothy Lee

Throughout the years, anthropologist Dorothy Lee has longed to understand the diversity of other cultures in a way to conquer the conflicts that have risen in western society. She addresses the key social problem as one which attempts to pacify social structure and personal [autonomy](#). Dorothy Lee gives an insight on child rearing within the Navaho Indian culture which encourages respect for the sheer personal being; a solution to what she views as crucial involving the disagreements between structure and freedom.

The reconciliation between social structure and personal autonomy has become a key problem in the world today. Dorothy Lee addresses the difficulty to comply these two broad areas in order for them to work in accordance to one another. It is known that every individual has the capacity to act upon free will however in conformity with society to achieve the greater good. Dorothy Lee explores the importance of human [dignity](#) and how every person is entitled to rights and obligations to become essential parts of society. She tends to distinguish the differences from a holistic outlook from that of an individualistic perspective comparing “principles of conformity and individual initiative, group living and private freedom of choice, social regulation and personal autonomy.” (15) The key social

problem being discussed limits us from our full potential due to our constant stimulation by how society wishes on socializing us. Society's intentions of nurturing individuals to behave a certain way does have it's restraints on personal freedom which is depicted as the dilemma that Dorothy Lee intends on deciphering.

The Navaho Indians; a society resig...

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...ents that benefit the rest of society. Dorothy Lee draws that both structure and our own personal motivations are equally influential in how we make decisions or choices which can ultimately effect the rest of our lives.

In conclusion, anthropologist Dorothy Lee focuses on resolving the key social problem in the struggle between individual autonomy and social structure. She utilizes her time in focusing on many distinct cultural groups such as the raising of children from a Navaho Indian perspective which she experienced through ethnography. Dorothy concludes that respect for the sheer personal being can allow every individual to be seen as equal rather than placed on a hierarchy which puts a degrading emphasis on certain minority groups. If we are able to comply with society, we will be granted the freedom we deserve to become valued and regarded for.

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